

*The Charge of GOD to GIDEON.*

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J N

Three SERMONS,

Preach'd Nov. 5, 1724, 1725, 1726.

To which is added, A

S E R M O N

ON THE

Nature of FAITH,

November 5, 1721.

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By THOMAS BRADBURT.

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L O N D O N:

Printed for JOHN MARSHALL at the Bible  
in Grace-Church Street.  
MDCCXXVII.

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The Charge of GOD to GIBSON

IN

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Preach'd Nov. 2, 1724, 1725, 1726.

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University of Cambridge

BY THOMAS BRADBURY

LONDON

Printed for John Marshall at the Bible  
in Great Church Street.  
MDCCLXXII

1727

# PREFACE.



*Was very unwilling to have printed these Sermons, as several know, by whose importunity I am prevailed on to do it. The deliverance it self seems to be now forgot, and the zeal for keeping it in memory, treated with as much ridicule by some Dissenters, as ever it was by the Tories; of which I'll give one instance, that will let the world see, how a man must expect to be used, if he continues to believe the doctrine he has always professed. It agrees to what a Clergman told me some years ago, that if I ever appeared against the Arian error, I should find my self as much hated by the Whigs, as ever I had been from another quarter. And I have lived to see, that no value for the revolution, no hazards for the protestant succession, no arguments against popery in the church, and tyranny in the state, shall be of any regard among a party, who have made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. Such a rant of profaneness, ill manners, and impudence runs thro' a pamphlet called, *A Defence of Christianity against the power of Enthusiasm*, by Mr. Thomas Morgan of Marlborough, as is only to be equalled in another scandalous piece; entitled, *An Appeal to the Dissenting Ministers*.*

The later of these, I hope to handle with more freedom; but of the former, after his well known Character, I shall take no farther notice, than in a single quotation from him; that the Reader may have a specimen, how good he is at abusing men and burlesquing the bible.

“ Could any man in England, says he, but  
“ Mr. Bradbury, in the hour of distress, have  
“ brandished



## The P R E F A C E.

“ brandished the sword of the Spirit in such a  
“ manner as to make some people ravingly mad,  
“ and others as extravagantly merry? Could any  
“ one but himself so patly, and pertinently have ap-  
“ plied all the prophecies of the Old Testament to  
“ the downfall and destruction of the French King and  
“ our tory Ministers? And can we be secure that  
“ we shall never more stand in need of such an ad-  
“ vocate? May not the days of darkness and tri-  
“ bulation return upon us when we are least aware,  
“ and our fears once more shiver us over the brink  
“ of ruin? And O! What should we not then  
“ give for one Bradbury, to stand in the gap,  
“ to make up the breach; to strike our enemies  
“ dead with harmless thunder, and to employ all  
“ the powers of his mighty faith in the defence  
“ of our religion and liberties?”

By such writers as these are we now abused; these are the sorry tools of an Arian faction; these the advocates of liberty and charity. However, I cannot be silent to the good providence, that has clothed the chief of my enemies with shame; one of 'em being charged before the house of Lords with blasphemy, and another expelled the Commons (by an unanimous vote) for deceit and falsehood.

I have with these three Sermons on the story of Gideon, republished another that has been long out of print, and for some time much enquired for: And I the rather consented to it, because of the charge that has been brought against it by the scribblers of the party, that it is irrational and enthusiastick. I hope for another opportunity of defending the principles, that are there laid down, as well as acquainting the world with the treatment I have had from false brethren.

Feb. 11, 1726.



# SERMON I.

Preach'd November 5, 1724.

At the *Thursday* Evening-Lecture in  
JEWIN-STREET.

JUDGES VI. 14.

*And the Lord look'd upon him, and said,  
go in this thy might, and thou shalt save  
Israel from the hand of the Midianites;  
have not I sent thee?*



S we have liv'd to see the return of  
that day in which God has wrought  
a great deliverance for this nation,  
I must needs attend the wonderful  
things that he has done, and, with  
a yearly offering, magnify the work Job. xxxvi.  
which men behold; every man may see it; man 24, 25.  
may behold it afar off. This is what God has Psal. lxxi.  
taught me from my youth, and hitherto I have 17.  
declar'd it for nine and twenty years; tho' quite  
thro' the whole course of that ministry, I have  
been loaded with the contradiction of sinners, and  
expos'd to periodical insults.

B

This



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This strife and reproach of tongues have come from different quarters: It us'd to be from those who were starv'd by the Revolution; now 'tis as vile and furious from those who are maintain'd by it. The former were asham'd of it, and the latter a shame to it; and it is not very hard to tell from whom the cause of religion and liberty are most in danger; a superstitious enemy, or an unbelieving advocate; a rigorous *Papist*, or a swearing *Deist*. For it is certain, that God will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain: He will abhor a people for the provocation of his sons and his daughters.

I have all along consider'd the *Revolution* as a turn of providence that reviv'd or establish'd the  
 Psal. lx. 4. *kingdom of Christ among men*; and therefore in the name of this *Jehovah* have we set up our banners. His authority over the churches is what we have pleaded for, as a tribute to him, and a security to ourselves. It gave a glory to God in the highest, and maintain'd a peace upon earth.

This jewel in a Redeemer's crown is defeated by those who tell us of his *Vicar* below, and undermin'd by those who deny his *Deity* above. The *Papist* gives us a titular God upon earth; and the *Arians* will allow Christ himself to be no more than a titular God in heaven! The one defiles the place of his feet, and the other assaults him upon his throne. I may say it, not from conjecture or speculation, but severe experience, that there are a set of Protestants, whose zeal carries 'em more to the pulling down of Jesus than of Anti-christ: Nay, a man shall be loaded with a charge of popery, and laid out to the fury of the world as the author of an *Inquisition*; not for advancing the supremacy of *Rome*, but for defending that of his God. For this he shall be the contempt  
 of

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of acquaintances, the song of drunkards, and the laughter of fools.

But let us retire from the noise of talkers, who Jer. ix. 3.  
bend their tongue like their bow for lyes, and proceed from evil to evil: We shall consider the doing of the Lord; not as it is revil'd by some, and perverted by others, but as a model of salvation that is drawn out in the bible, and transcrib'd in providence.

The government of the judges, I have given a publick account of several years ago; the whole story of that administration, which lasted about 450 years, seems to be told in a perpetual circle of these six particulars:

First, That the Jews were brought into a plentiful country, the glory of all lands. Then Jer. ii. 7.

Secondly, Prosperity made them luxuriant; and as they turn'd the mercy of God into wantonness, they did the same by his grace. Sensuality and superstition, revellings, banquettings, and abominable idolatries maintain'd one another; as they were full, they kick'd against the rock of Deu. xxxii. 15.  
their salvation; they despis'd his providence, and polluted his worship. *They did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim: They forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who brought 'em out of the land of Egypt, and follow'd other gods, the gods of the people that were round about 'em; they bowed themselves unto 'em, and provok'd the Lord to anger.* Judges ii. 11, 12.

Thirdly, After this God disdain'd that ever the name of liberty should be mention'd, or the thing itself enjoy'd by those who us'd it as an occasion to the flesh; and therefore as they sold

B 2

them-



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themselves to do evil, he sold 'em to bondage.  
 Ver. 14. *The anger of the Lord was hot against 'em, and de-*  
 15. *liver'd 'em into the hands of spoilers that spoiled*  
*them; so that they could no longer stand before their*  
*enemies: Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the*  
*Lord was against 'em for evil, as the Lord had said,*  
*and as the Lord had sworn; and they were greatly*  
*distressed.*

Fourthly, The next part of their history lets us see, that tho' they despis'd the faith and repentance that came by hearing; yet they are brought into another opinion of 'em by feeling; and learn by discipline what they rejected in doctrine. Thus prisons are sanctified, after sanctuaries had been profan'd; *they cryed unto the Lord.*

Fifthly, when God produc'd such a temper in 'em, it never fail'd to be the spring of a new deliverance: The way in which he wrought it was by raising up judges; inspiring the men, ennobling the cause, and tearing the people out of the hand of the mighty. Ver. 18. *The Lord was with the judge, and deliver'd 'em out of the hands of their enemies all the days of the judge; for it repented the Lord because of their groanings, by reason of those that oppress'd and vex'd them.*

Sixthly, Then the land had rest for some years, till the old seeds of idolatry and filthiness began to be rank, and so they went the same round over again. Ver. 19. *It came to pass when the judge was dead, they return'd and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following after other gods; they ceas'd not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way. Their prosperity made them impious; their impiety made them captives; in captivity they were penitent;*

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penitent; their repentance was regarded as a *sacrifice* by him who had implanted it as a *principle*. As they rais'd up their prayers, God rais'd up judges; their judges gave them safety; their safety made them secure; their security made them sin. And thus it held on both sides the river *Jordan*; for they were govern'd by different judges; and without observing that, 'tis impossible to comprehend the history of this book within the limits of 450 years, which the apostle has given us: For if you compute the accounts we have of the several judges, it will amount to a much greater number. But the thing lies easie enough, without any shew of a contradiction, if you suppose that two judges, one on the eastern, and the other on the western part of the country sustain'd their office at the same time.

That branch of the history which I have now chosen, relates to the life of *Gideon*; and as men may see in it some lines that are copied in all their strength, upon our *Revolution*, so I shall set them out for the entertainment of your faith and hope in God. The bounties of providence may be mingled in our thoughts with spiritual blessings of heavenly things in Christ. The celebration of the passover was first a memorial of what had past, and then in prospect of good things to come. They look backwards upon their deliverance out of *Egypt*: It was a night much to be remembred to the Lord in their generations; and then they were also to look forwards to the hope of *Israel*, to the Lamb of God, who should take away the sins of the world. Thus when he sent redemption to his people, he commanded his covenant for ever. They who look'd to no more than *Moses* made it a carnal ordinance, that was only

Act. xiii.  
20.

Exod. xiv.  
42.

Act. xxviii  
20.

Joh. i. 29.  
Psal. cxi. 9.

Heb. ix. 1.

fit



- Act. xxvi. 7. fit for a worldly sanctuary; but those of the twelve tribes, who instantly serv'd God day and night, (i. e. in the passover which was kept at night;) these acted in hope of the promise made to their fathers: They were a cloud of witnesses to some future glory; looking, as believers do now, to Jesus the author and finisher of their faith.

- With the same complication of thought are we this day to admire the loving kindness of our God, Had he not broke in pieces the yoke of tyranny, we could never have known the privilege of devotion: He therefore cast down the mighty from their seats, that we being delivered from the wrath of our enemies, might serve him without fear in holiness all our days. The bondage of sin is like that of an absolute monarchy; 'tis an arbitrary government within us, and our salvation from them both is what we are call'd to remember this day. They are both wrought by the same hand; that Jesus who has set his throne in the heavens, and has done his pleasure upon earth: They are both wrought for the same end, that we may walk up and down in the name of the Lord; and they are both preparations for the same happiness, a communion with God here, and the enjoyment of him as our portion for ever.

- The period of history that our text belongs to, seems to have some particulars in it more remarkable than any other: It relates to their deliverance from the *Midianites*, which is typical of the great salvation, as the prophet tells us. Thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the days of *Midian*; for to us a child is born, and a son is given, &c.

1. Those

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1. These were the most numerous enemy, as you see *ver. 5. They came up with their cattle and their tents as grasshoppers for multitude, and both they and their camels were without number.*

2. They were the most cruel and barbarous, and reduc'd this unhappy people to what we call the perfection of slavery: Under other tyrants they were capable of getting riches, possessions, and sometimes honours at court; but we are told of the *Midianites*,

First, That they would not let them have houses to live in, *ver. 2. Therefore the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds.* They had all the miseries of war raging within their bowels in a time of peace.

Secondly, They would not allow them the bread of life, *ver. 3, 4. So it was when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came out against 'em, and they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come to Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass.* You have these things mention'd in a very moving way. This captivity was no longer *Rom. ix. 28.* than seven years; and indeed unless the Lord had shorten'd those days, no flesh could be saved; the *Isai. lvii. 16.* spirit must have fail'd before him. It might well be said, *ver. 6. That Israel was greatly impoverish'd because of the Midianites; and Gideon himself was threshing of wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.* They got their bread with the peril of *Lam. v. 9.* their lives, because of the sword in the wilderness.

Thirdly, their case seems to be quite hopeless, as *Gideon* saith to the angel, *if the Lord be with us, why is all this befallen us?* Here was such a calamity as quite raz'd out all the marks of a divine presence.



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fence. He adds, *The Lord has forsaken us.* They saw not their signs. God never us'd to leave them without some token for good; but now he was quite gone: Thus low may religion run before judgment returns to righteousness; to shew that the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance.

Psal. xciv.  
17-

Fourthly, The most dreadful part of the story is, that the people had given up their religion to those who had taken away their liberties. *Israel* sought unto him that smote him: They were still idolaters. *Gideon's* own father rais'd up an altar for *Baal*, which his son is order'd to throw down: And we may suppose that the family were zealous for their superstition; *because Gideon fear'd his father's household, and the men of the city, and durst not do by day what God himself had commanded him.* So that here's a people lost as to all rational hopes of a deliverance, and all spiritual preparations for it: They were neither able to work a salvation, nor fit to receive one.

Psal. cii.  
13-

But when the set time to favour *Sion* is come, the design of providence is like the spring in nature; as the heaven warms, the earth opens, the seeds below begin to stir, and the influences above to operate. God does in politicks as he does in nature; he sends forth his Spirit, and they are created, and renews the face of the earth. A nation that had lost their strength shall regain it; and they who had defil'd themselves with idols, shall abhor them: The whole work of the Lord goes on together, as you find by the deliverance that he proclaims to his captives in this chapter. He does it two ways.

Psal. civ.  
30-

1<sup>st</sup>, He sent a *Prophet*, to upbraid them with what he had done for *them*, and to reprove them for what they had done against *him*; nor does he say

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say one word of their deliverance. 'Tis sad when ministers have no authority or commission to bring glad tydings, but only the terrors of the Lord. However it's not in vain; for if a prophet is not always a messenger of peace, he is commonly the forerunner. If God designs to destroy a people, he will not let them be instructed at all: When a piece of ground is nigh to cursing, and whose end is to be burnt, he commands the clouds, that they rain no rain upon it. But his very raising a prophet was a token for good. Heb. vi. 8;

2dly, After that, he visits them by his *Angel*. The prophet did not speak in secret, but I suppose to many thousands of *Israel*; the angel comes to a single person: The prophet prepar'd the way of the Lord, by leading them to a sense of their impiety: The angel sets about the thing itself, and puts the whole design into present life: *He sat under an oak in Ophrah, that pertain'd to Joash*: There he appear'd to *Gideon*, and said to him, *the Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour*. *Gideon* took him to be no more than a man; tho' perhaps a man of God, as you will see by his answer, *Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this evil befallen us? and where be all his miracles that our fathers told us of? saying, did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt; but now the Lord has forsaken us, and deliver'd us into the hands of the Midianites.*

Observe the generous soul of this great man: The angel speaks to none but *him*; The Lord is with *thee*; but he is far from catching at any personal honours, and therefore makes his objection upon the head of their *general* miseries; if the Lord be with *us*, why is this evil befallen *us*? My text is the angel's answer to his argument, which he conveys both in things and words; he made him both feel and hear: *The Lord looked upon him, and*

said,



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said, *go in this thy might, and thou shalt deliver Israel out of the hands of the Midianites? have not I sent thee!* There are three things that appear very glorious in these words.

1. The person who brought these glad tidings; he is said to be *the angel of the Lord* in the former verse, and *the Lord, or Jehovah* himself, in this.

2. The action that he did; and this is laid down in a phrase that will rather astonish than enlighten us: *He looked upon him.*

3. The sense or meaning of that wonderful look; *go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel out of the hands of the Midianites; have not I sent thee?* so that it is to be understood,

1<sup>st</sup>, As a preparation for the work, *go in this thy might.* That look, whatever it was, inspir'd him; He is animated by it; it gave him all that he wanted within.

2<sup>dly</sup>, 'Tis an assurance of the blessing. *Thou shalt save Israel out of the hand of the Midianites.* It both created a principle of faith, and may be consider'd as the reason or argument of it.

3<sup>dly</sup>, 'Tis also his commission to the office, a divine credential; *have not I sent thee?* Thus he went out, furnish'd with a strength in his soul, appriz'd of a blessing to clear his way, and declar'd Captain general to the armies of the living God; and we need not wonder that success and victory are made to follow *the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.*

The story of the *Jews* in one sense, is more a peculiar than that of any other people, but in another 'tis less so, and seems to be given us for a sample of providence to the several ages of the Church. |

1. It is very much a peculiar, in God's being their political head, in his raising up the person who should deliver them, and following his arms with a certain blessing, as he never fail'd to do quite

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quite thro' the government of the judges, the only form of his own choosing. Every man of them was both a saint and a hero; every act of administration was just; every battle was glorious; every attempt successful. It was full of God from first to last: It began with his appointment, and it always ended with his blessing. Thus he never dealt with any other nation; and thus he left off to deal with them, when their lechery made them take the name of *King* from him, and give it to another. 'Tis true, they call'd their monarch the Lord's anointed; he calls it their *rejecting of him* that he should not rule over them. Yet,

Psal. cxlvii.  
20.

2. Their story is recorded for our admonition. From the bible we have both our doctrines and our politicks, and the hopes that are set before us in all sorts of danger. We learn from that book, that the saints of the most High shall take and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. When I read the wars of *Alexander, Cesar*, or any of those men who went about seeking whom they might devour, I'm only picking a dry bone: There's nothing but a heap of facts; nor do I see any more in the story, than how the God of heaven can dash the potsherds of the earth one against another. But in reading over *the book of the wars of the Lord*, I see what he has done for a peculiar people, and what he will do for those who are looking to him from the isles afar off; to him that overcomes will he give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers.

Dan. vii.  
18.

Rev. ii. 26,  
27.

Every deliverance in the old testament is a trophy of that faith that should be more abundant in the new: We are compass'd with *Jewish* heroes as a cloud of witnesses; and look to Jesus as they did



did both their Lord and ours. Our faith has the  
 Heb. xi. 1. same course of life and action: It is in us, as it  
 was in them, the evidence of things not seen, and  
 the substance of things hoped for: It has the same  
 ver. 8. opposition and fury to deal with, it condemns the  
 Rom. x. 3. world, and the world condemns it. It makes us  
 heirs of a righteousness which they are ignorant of,  
 and will not bow themselves to: And it does the  
 Heb. xi. same wonders; for as by faith the walls of *Jericho*  
 30. fell down, so shall those of *Babylon* with shouts  
 Rev. xviii. and the sound of a trumpet. There will be a voice  
 4, 5, 6. from heaven, saying, come out of her, my people,  
 that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you  
 receive not of her plagues; for her sins have reach'd  
 unto heaven, and God has remembered her iniqui-  
 ties; reward her even as she has rewarded you,  
 double to her double, according to her works;  
 in the cup that she has filled, fill to her double.

Heb. xi. We have *Gideon*, *Barak* and *Samson*, *David*,  
 32, 33, 34. *Samuel* also, and the prophets crowded in among  
 the glorious examples of a faith that subdued king-  
 doms, wrought righteousness, out of weakness  
 made strong, waxed valiant in fights, and turn'd  
 to flight the armies of the aliens: And do you  
 think, that believing in Jesus has lost the virtue  
 now he is come, which it always had when they  
 1 Joh. v. 4. saw him afar off? No; whoever is born of God  
 overcomes the world, and this is the victory where-  
 by we overcome the world, even our faith.

You may see three particulars in the story of  
*Gideon*, and match them all with our *Revolution*;  
 Psal. cxi. 2. that work of the Lord which is honourable  
 and glorious, and will be sought out of all those  
 who have pleasure therein.

1. That here is a latent virtue, a hidden life in  
 the cause of God, when it seems to be totally lost  
 in the eyes of men. The humane reason pretends  
 to

to unfold and comprehend all the mysteries of eternal salvation; yet before we take that for granted, let us try it upon things that are seen, and are but temporal. Do you imagine when the *Midianites* had left *Israel* no houses, but dens and caves of the earth, no corn but what they stole, that they had any apprehensions of being crush'd and spoil'd by the people whom they had starved? Was not every thing secure from that quarter? Might they not settle on their lees unmolested and unconcerned? Nay, was there any more hope in *Israel* concerning this thing than there was fear in *Midian*?

What regard they paid to a prophet or an angel is out of the question; because this was receiv'd as a message from the Lord: But would not that *free thinker* have been taken for a cheat, and every one that believ'd him for a fool, who went about to say, that a deliverance was easie, or pretended to draw it out in lines of demonstration? For any one to have told them as a politician, that a thresher of wheat should be the captain of their armies, that three hundred men was a sufficient number, and broken pitchers a sufficient armour, would scarce have given the man a reputation. And yet it was as impossible to *deny* the truth of this salvation afterwards, as it might have been to *believe* it at first.

I'm apt to think it was in such a double way, that God made foolish the wisdom of this world at the time of our *Revolution*: The heathen could say, as well as we, the Lord has done great things for them. The enemies of our peace had the throne in their possession, and the laws at their disposal; the sword in their pay, and fires and gallows in their view. They had tryed what could be done with perjur'd evidence, and profligate juries, with ravenous armies and greedy magistrates: By swearing and lying, and killing and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood,

Psal. cxxvi.

2, 3.

Hof. iii. 2.



blood. They had a king receptive of every church-conviction, and obedient to every church-command; and was so entirely devoted to them, that tho' it is no difficult thing to find princes that will change their religion for a crown, here is one who lost three crowns for his religion.

The case look'd very desperate, when the management of the priests was so furious, and the resignation of the prince so entire. One would think, that they who pretend to change a wafer into a God, had got another trick, to change their king into a wafer; a piece of paste, that would take any impression; fit either to be swallow'd or ador'd, either kept in a box at home, or carried in procession abroad. The day was all their own in their judgment; and I believe there was not much to contradict it in yours. I'm apt to think you talk'd of popery and a standing army, as the spies did of the *Anakims*, we were in our own fight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their fight.

Num. xiii.  
33.

Indeed there was always work for prayer, and always room for faith; but what's that to the people, who call it *Enthusiasm*? You can scarce apprehend that they who insult your belief in the greatest doctrine, would have run any hazards for those that are inferior. Tho' they can talk freely against a popish superstition, yet that is, when there's no king to head the interest, and no priest who dare appear in the argument; when there's no temptation to a mass, and no danger of a faggot. But many of you can remember it was a cloudy and dark day. You had no pleasure in it, but fears were on high.

The attempts of a deliverance under the prince of *Orange* had nothing but an unseen divinity to distinguish it from that under the duke of *Monmouth*. Indeed the event prov'd, that a blessing was in it. But who could have expected a second insurrection  
after

after those outrages of cruelty upon the first? However it was in *Britain* as it has been in *Israel* *Jehovah-Shammah*, the Lord was there. We receiv'd our deliverance, not as the creature of politicks, or by the meer dint of war, but were like them that dream, and could scarce think ourselves awake to believe, what yet we had not power to deny.

People may sacrifice what they please to their reason, but it seem'd at that time to refuse it all. Whether the nation was sav'd or no is out of the question; we saw, we look'd upon, we heard, we handled the great deliverance: But the thing was so unlikely, that if it were possible, we should have made the fact itself to be dubious.

*Secondly*, Whenever God determines to work salvation for a people, he will either find an instrument, or he will make one. *Jephtha* the *Gileadite* was a soldier of fortune, as we usually call them; a man that maintain'd himself and his army by the sword; and therefore it was but turning his common thoughts into a more honourable way, to make him the captain of *Israel*. *Othniel* the son of *Kenaz*, had been a commander when the land was taken, and therefore was train'd up for new services after it was lost. But who was *Gideon*? a man of a private character, and I'm sure about very private work, when he was threshing wheat to hide it from the enemy. 'Tis true, the angel calls him a mighty man of valour, and says the Lord was with him; but that's only a propheticall language, calling the things that are not, as tho' they were; for that he had been employ'd in nothing more magnificent than threshing of corn, appears by his answer; *O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.*

You will easily, by the language that he uses, distinguish between cowardice and modesty. As many



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many times there is a reluctance to publick service that shows a capacity ; so there may be a readiness for it that betrays nothing but conceit and self-interest. I have often wonder'd at men's seeking places ; 'tis a thing so vain and covetous, so indecent and greedy, that it amounts to no less in words than this, " I am furnish'd for all that I should do, and deserving of all that I can get ; fit to serve my country, and worthy to plunder it."

Indeed this restraint is taken off from modesty, when places are brought down to a market price ; because the objection is gone out of the way, that every honest man ought to make ; that tho' there is neither merit in my actions, nor reality in my qualifications, yet I have both in my money, A nation is never like to be well serv'd by men who have bought their honours of those who have sold their conscience. *Simony* in politicks is the same with that in divinity ; it brings a man into the gall of bitterness.

It was not thus that *Gideon* came into the welfare of *Israel*, or the great *Nassau* into the glorious Revolution. Our liberties were bought and sold, but our crown was dropt and taken up again. God Isa. xiv. 13. rais'd him up in righteousness, and directed all his ways, to build his city, and let go his captives, not for price nor reward. 'Tis true, he had been inur'd to wars, and encumber'd with factions : The *Arminian* party, who had turn'd all the grace of God to those countries into wantonness, first did what they could to make him odious at home, and then contriv'd to deliver him up as a prey to those abroad. But God endear'd him to the people whom he should deliver, and made him terrible to those whom he was to obey ; and, without entring into any vindication of popular tumults, it seem'd to be the vengeance of the Lord, that the

the jealousie blown up against the house of *Orange*, should turn its whole force in the massacre of the *two men* that rais'd it; and that the *French* army, who came to devour with the sword what they had bought with money, found that the God of Heaven would not deliver up what treacherous men had no right to sell; and therefore as they lost the bargain they shunn'd the battle.

His undertaking our deliverance was a thing still more out of the way. God had suffer'd the ravenous appetite of *France* to extend itself so far, as if he had call'd them to arise and devour kingdoms, be voracious of liberties, and all the religion that the mother of harlots has not taken for her own. This unfitness for an expedition of so much hazard and fatigue, was a greater than *Gideon* could bring into his argument. For, as a prince and a warrior, he was restrain'd from designs upon a kingdom, where he had never been a subject, and from quarrels where he was not a party.

He might have been held in by the ceremonial articles of honour, of which no person was ever more tenacious; but these he was taught to break through by a sense of *the honour that comes from God only*. The engagements of a son and nephew, the distance of the place which was to become the seat of war, were all over-rul'd by the cause of religion and liberty: And, tho' the phrase is now laugh'd at, and well it may by those that cannot answer the argument; Yet the prince had no other errand hither, than in his own way to contend for *the faith that was once deliver'd to the saints*.

God did not call a thresher of wheat to thresh the mountains, and make them as chaff. It was not a man whose flesh was iron, and whose bones were brass, whom he engag'd to venture out at sea, in a stormy season, in the dead of the year, at the beginning of a cold and desolate winter; no, but

D

a person



Joel iii. 10. a person sickly from his youth; and tho' his soul seem'd fit for any thing, yet his body was fit for nothing but a bed of languishing. When he calls us to beat our plow-shares into swords, and our pruning-hooks into spears, the weak shall say I am strong.

A man unexpos'd to the usual temptations of pride and avarice, whose riches were great enough for his family, and whose honours were like to be extinguish'd in his person. Had there been the hopes of kings descending from his loyns, and that a royal posterity should have enter'd into his labours; he had acted from the same argument in seizing one kingdom, that a neighbouring monarch did in grasping at all. But as all the posterity that he could be thought to provide for, was that of *his people*, it appears either that ambition had no flame within him, or that it was not fed by the common fuel.

He might have chosen to let the name of *Nassau* drop in peace, within the bounds of that countrey where it had risen with glory, and not suffer the last of the family to fall a sacrifice to the *French*, as the first had done to the *Spaniard*. He knew that assassinations against a prince of *Orange* was an old trick of *Rome*. These were very good reasons for sitting at home, and would have appear'd consummate wisdom to every one else; but the grace of God within, and the cause of God abroad, makes them foolishness to the man, who was always asking, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? and tho' a person who had so much to lose, and so little to get, wanted no persuasions to have been at peace, yet when the spirit of the Lord comes mightily upon a hero, it never comes in vain. Its cast down  
 2Cor.x. 3. all strong holds and carnal imaginations in his heart,  
 as an earnest of what shall be done by his hands.

x. What?

3. Whatever difficulties entangle the work of God from without, they are more than answer'd by the principle that he gives within. The meanness of *Gideon's* family; the privacy of his own character; the power of the *Midianites*, the idolatry of his father's house; the poor state of *Israel* were all over-ruled by the cast of an eye, *the Lord looked upon him*, and said, go in this thy might, and thou shalt save *Israel*.

Thus it is in every cause of God, both the ministry that is committed to preachers, and the dangers that are devolv'd upon Patriots: Our great Lord tells them both, my grace is sufficient for thee; and they may equally say, after such an assurance, when I am weak then am I strong, because the power of Christ does rest upon me. These things I cannot now consider, but the scheme I propose to do it in is this;

1. I would observe the perfection of the author, who is no other than Jesus the son of God, 1 Tim. vi. 15. the blessed and only potentate, the prince of the kings of the earth. 'Tis he that inspires heroes Rev. i. 7. and humbles tyrants; who both lodges and secures the heavenly treasure in earthen vessels.

2. We shall consider the nature of the influence, he looked upon him: He talks of it like a God with whom every action is easie, and every purpose effectual.

3. We may observe the effects of what he did upon the persons who received the swift impression. Go (says he to *Gideon*) in *this thy might*, and thou shalt save *Israel*. Thus it always is in every attempt, either against tyranny or infidelity: The force arises from within, not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts; and then the great mountain before *Zerubbabel* shall become a plain. Zach. iv. 6





## SERMON II.

Preach'd November 5, 1725.

At the *WEIGH-HOUSE*.

JUDGES vi. 14.



THESE words I begun to open the last year with an application to that wonderful work of God that ought to be remember'd by every hearty protestant, and will certainly be sought out of all them that have pleasure in it. The history of *Gideon* is very like the deliverance that was wrought for this nation in 1688, that year of the right hand of the most High; and therefore the praises we owe to what the Lord did among us, may be carried on with an eye to the great salvation of his antient people under this mighty man of valour. The text is an account of the divine conduct, by way of preparation and furniture to *Gideon*, for the cause of religion, and the welfare of *Israel*.

1. The action itself is but very little, had it not been the work of God; *the Lord looked on him*; and yet,

2. The sense that he puts upon it is the greatest that can be imagin'd; it is made to signifie all that a man could wish for.

1<sup>st</sup>, 'Twas a qualification for the battles of the Lord, go in this thy might: He was inspir'd and warm'd into noble resolutions by *the eye of his God upon him*.

2<sup>dly</sup>, 'Twas an assurance of victory; thou shalt save *Israel* out of the hand of the *Midianites*.

3<sup>dly</sup>, 'Twas a divine commission to the office, have not I sent thee? from the extremity they were fallen into, and the surprizing way of raising up a deliverer, I gave you three observations that are visible through all the parts both of *their* story and *ours*.

*First*, That there is a hidden-life in the cause of religion and liberty when it seems to be totally gone in the eyes of men; this I enlarg'd upon both from scripture records, and from national experience; and it is a doctrine that will never cease to be true, and never fail to be delightful: We were ready to say as *Gideon* did, if the Lord be with us, why is all this evil befallen us! and by whom shall *Jacob* arise, for he is small? well, by whom should he arise, but his God who is still the mighty one *Isa. xli. 14.* of *Jacob*? and therefore has directed his promises to them in their low estate; fear not, thou worm *Jacob*, and ye men of *Israel*, I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer the holy one of *Israel*: When the foundations are destroy'd that God has laid either of truth or property, when the lust of tyranny, or the roaring of unbelief, come in like a flood, still remember who the great proprietor of the gospel is, the King of saints; and he loves it



too well to throw it away; it is too much his darling to be given to the power of the day.

We have known the need of such consolations, and I cannot tell how soon we may know it again; when truth has fail'd, and he that departed from iniquity made himself a prey, when there was no knowledge of God in the land; our souls have been driven from what we saw in providence, to the bare declaration of the Bible, that Christ is the Son of the living God; and though this is what flesh and blood cannot reveal to us, yet upon that rock he has built his church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Isa. lix. 15.  
Mat. xvi. 18.

Secondly, we farther see from the story in this chapter, and the parallel to it in our own nation, that whenever God determines to work salvation for his people, he will either find an instrument, or he will make one. Sometimes he gives out a sort of a proclamation, who will rise up for me against evil doers, who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity? And he reſents the cowardice and lukewarmness of his people in a cloudy and dark day: Curse them bitterly who come not out to the help of the Lord against the mighty: Psal. xciv. 16.

Jud. v. 23. He is said to wonder that there was none to uphold; but though in these expressions he speaks after the manner of men, yet we must not suppose they signify any imperfection in him as they do in us: He wants no counsel to make his purpose right, and no alliance to make it effectual; his own arm brings salvation, and his fury shall uphold him.

He calls for *Gideon*, whose family was poor in *Manasseh*, and he the least in his father's house; he finds him threshing wheat by night to hide it from the *Midianites*; but he turns his arms to another employment, which I cannot give you in better language than that of the prophet.

Isa. xli,

*Isa.* xli. 15, 16. Behold I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument, having teeth thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff, thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away.

*Thirdly*, you farther see that whatever intanglements may be upon the work of God without, yet they are all dissolv'd by what he does within. The number of the *Midianites* is compar'd to that of grass-hoppers, and so may their way of acting; they had almost extinguish'd the very name of *Israel*, destroyed both the land and people too. *Gideon* may well object the fewness of the troops that were likely to be under his command, from the multitude that would certainly be collected against him; but he had done thinking of danger, and feeling his fears, when the Lord *looked upon him*; he went in *that* as his might, without any dread of the battle, or any doubt of the victory.

This is the case I design to consider and improve, and there are three particulars that make up the wonder of the fact, and may lead us to a right application of a deliverance that is so conducted.

1. We see that the whole affair is to be regarded, as an argument of infinite perfections, in him whose work it is: 'Twas the doing of the Lord, *he look'd on Gideon*.

2. You find what influence goes along with his actions, he did no more than *look* on the person whom he designed to inspire, and animate for the deliverance of his people, and the glory of his name; and yet,

3. That turn of his countenance, that cast of his eye, had all the effect that could be desir'd, *Gideon went in that his might* to save *Israel*.

I. We are call'd to consider, who it is that raises up judges, and deliverers for the world, and especially for those that fear him; for you may take the providence in this double light, either as it is  
extended



extended over all nations, or as it's design'd for the good of a peculiar people. God reigns over the heathen; God sits on the throne of his holiness; this latter was only among the *Jews*. The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of *Abraham*, for the shields of all the earth belong to the Lord, and he is greatly exalted.

Pfal. xlvii.  
8, 9.

He is call'd *the Lord* or *Jehovah* in this text, and it agrees to what we read in a thousand more; but however, I must observe with what variety the holy Spirit has thought fit to speak of him in the chapter before us: In the eleventh and twelfth verses, he is said to be *the angel of the Lord*; and afterwards he is called *the Lord* himself; then again *an angel of God*, and after that *the Lord God*; this promiscuous infolding of titles, using them in common of one and the self same person, makes it easie to understand who it was that had been their King of old, and commanded deliverance for *Jacob*.

1. The frequent returns of the words *Lord* and *God* in the telling of this story, leaves all created angels out of the case: They were often ministring spirits to those heirs of salvation, but they are never called by the name of *Jehovah*; they have the title of gods, but so far from having it upon account of the divine nature, that their creation, their dependence, their duty is proclaimed with their titular Duty, worship him all ye gods; they were not objects of worship, but servants, not to take it, but to give it. So that though they are ministers of a Redeemer's purpose, and the executioners of his providence, yet it is not one of them who came to *Gideon* with a commission, and a promise, the Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour; for to which of the angels was it at any time said, thou art *Jehovah*? and yet

Pfal. xcvi.  
7.

2. Calling this person by the name of an angel, who was no less than *Jehovah* himself, gives a limitation

tation to the sense of the word, that it cannot be understood of the Father, whom our Saviour says <sup>John vi. 41</sup> no man hath seen at any time. He is never called an angel, or a man, but it is the Son that became so familiar to them in those prophetic ages, on purpose to establish their faith upon an incarnation, that God would be manifest in the flesh. You read of several things in the course of this story, that are by no means to be understood of the person who was not to be made of a woman, and made under the law.

1. I have already observ'd he is call'd an angel, a name that the Father never went by, but it is given to another person, not to express the *nature*, but the *office*: He has two natures, but neither of them that of an angel; as man he was made lower than the angels, they strengthen'd him; as God he is infinitely above them, and they worship him: in the marches of the children of *Israel* through the wilderness, the angel went before them, who is oftentimes call'd the Lord, and is said to pardon iniquity. The appearance in which he did it, was the appearance of fire by night, and a cloud by day, and a certain gush of glory on several occasions, covering of the tabernacle; thus he alone did <sup>Deu. xxxii</sup> lead them; he who was afterwards a light to light- <sup>12.</sup> en the gentiles was then the glory of his people <sup>Luke ii.</sup> *Israel*. In this period he is call'd the Angel of <sup>32.</sup> God's presence, one who was always present with <sup>Isa. lxiii. 9.</sup> God, and one who perform'd all his counsel by a gracious presence with the people. He sav'd them, he bare and carried them in the days of old; and yet they never understood it to be any less than *Jehovah*, who bare them upon eagles wings.

After that he is said to be the Angel of the covenant, as the messenger of the Lord of hosts, who comes upon his errand to a lost world; he reveal'd the deep things of God, being a party in the con-



trivance and the revenue of man's salvation, for the counsel of peace was between them both : This is the current language of the old Testament, both in telling the story of their deliverance, and in laying down prophecies of a much greater redemption. God is pleased to call himself by this name of an angel, that it might be understood not of the Father, but of him in whom all the fulness of the Godhead was to dwell bodily.

John viii.  
5, 6.

2. 'Tis farther said of this Angel of the Lord, that he sat under an oak which was in *Ophrah*, and that there he appear'd to *Gideon*, that he talk'd with him as a man does to his friend. This confirms the exposition that I gave you before, that these actions are what the scripture has never applied to the Father, but they must be understood as they were by those believers, who rejoiced to see the day of the Son of man, and who saw it afar off and were glad, as an earnest that the Word would be made flesh and dwell among us, or set up his tabernacle with us, for before he was thus made flesh, he was a sort of a way-faring man, that turn'd aside to tarry for a night.

3. *Gideon* himself takes him for no more than a man, tho' perhaps one of an excellent character, some prophet that God had raised up, as you will see by the solemnity with which he applies to him. *Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, where be all his miracles? Now the Lord hath forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites*; he would not have dar'd to have utter'd this objection, had he taken the person for the God of *Israel*, or even for a created angel.

Phil. ii. 8,  
9.

And thus low did the Redeemer please to make himself in those days, as an earnest that in the fulness of time it would be no grief of heart for him to become of no reputation, and take upon him the form of a servant. From all these particulars, it is

is very evident to me, that though by the names *God* and *Jehovah*, or the *God of Israel*, we are to understand the divine nature, yet the chief sense of the word binds our thoughts upon one person, even that *Immanuel* who is *God with us*.

*Isa. vii. 14.*

4. He is as often call'd the *Lord*, or *Jehovah*, as an angel, which carries our meditations quite above the innumerable company of those Spirits that are about the throne, or are sent forth to minister to them that shall be the heirs of salvation. As the Father never had a name so low as that of an angel; so no creature was ever dignified as we find this Angel to be, who revealed himself to *Gideon*.

1.) You see that, without any gap in the history, with a most visible connection, after *Gideon* had spoke to this Angel as a man, it's immediately said, the *Lord* looked upon him; how is it possible to put asunder what *God* has so firmly joyned together? The transition is natural and easy, that he whom the history calls the Angel of the *Lord* that appeared, and whom *Gideon* spake to under the title of *my Lord*, is the *Lord* that answered him with a look. Breaking the chain of the story, forcing the words to a sense, that they cannot receive without violence, is very properly called a wresting of the scripture; but tho' they who do it design the destruction of the truth, yet it ends in no other destruction than their own. *2 Pet. iii. 16.*

2.) The action it self is worthy of none but the most high *God*, 'tis like his way of speaking; he has very often represented himself as doing the greatest things in the slightest manner. Thus the whole creation is what he *breath'd* or pronounced, he did it by the word of his power; he spake and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast: If he touches the hills they tremble, and by the waft of his hand, the mountains are all in a smoke: We read of no more than that he *looked thro' the pillar*

*Heb. i. 3.*

*Psal. xxxiii*

*9, 10.*



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cloud upon the host of the *Egyptians*, and it immediately hung their chariot wheels, and made them unable to get out, till the waters were come in.

3.) *Gideon* himself is afterwards afraid, because he had seen the Angel of the Lord face to face, and cries out, *alas! Oh Lord God!* This shews what he and the good people of that age understood by the title. You will explain this part of the history by what you read in another, that when *Manoah* and his wife saw the Angel of the Lord ascending up in the flame of their offering, he cries out, we shall surely die because we have seen God.

We never read that they had such fearful apprehensions, when a created angel appeared to them; *Daniel* saw one of them in the den; my God has sent his angel to shut the lions mouths; nor did he think of dying when *Gabriel* was ordered to fly swiftly, and come down at the beginning of the evening sacrifice; and in the following ages, when these dispensations were not so frequent, the sight of an angel never struck them in the way that we read of *Gideon*; they were not put under the fear of death. Thus did *Zacharias* both see and hear the angel at the right hand of the altar of incense; fear fell upon him, but there is no need to tell him he should not die. The virgin *Mary* was troubled at the salutation, but she did not believe it mortal; nay, the very shepherds themselves, though they were affrighted, yet the whole multitude of the heavenly host does not make them conclude they shall dye: and the same you read of *Cornelius*, who was astonished, indeed, and so was *Peter*, whom the angel fetched out of prison, but in none of these cases do they ever suppose that the sight of an angel was certain death; and therefore when *Gideon* and *Manoah* talk at this rate, you may conclude they looked upon him who is called the angel

gel of the Lord, as the most high God himself, whom no man could see and live. And this agrees to the sentiments that they receiv'd by the tradition of their fathers; *Jacob* had wonder'd at it; I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserv'd; and yet when he speaks of this afterwards, he calls him, the angel that has preserv'd me from all evil.

Ex. xxxiii.

24.

Gen. xxxii

30.

xlvi. 15.

4.) 'Tis still plainer to the conviction of every one who can discern between good and evil, that it was no other than the most High God, with whom *Gideon* had this conversation, from the answer that was given him, verse the 23. *the Lord said, peace be unto thee, fear not, thou shalt not die*: He that declar'd this to him, is call'd the Lord, or *Jehovah*; and what he said to him is fit for no other mouth than that of a God; who kills and makes alive; who wounds, and who heals; and there is none who can deliver out of his hand.

Deu. xxxii.

39.

Well then, of the things that we have said this is the sum; the person who talk'd with *Gideon*, and struck all this life into him with a look, could not be a created angel, but he has a name above every name, he is called *Jehovah* in the whole run of the story; and yet it is not to be understood of the Father, whose dwelling was not with flesh, and whom no man hath seen at any time; who never takes on him either the nature of man, or the title of angels. We are therefore oblig'd to continue in what we have so often learnt; that our great Redeemer was the God of *Israel*, who spake at sundry times and in divers manners to the fathers; 'twas he who led out their armies, being no less than the Lord of hosts, both in heaven and in earth, among angels and men: The armies that are in heaven follow him, as they always us'd to do; for his eyes are as a flame of fire, and on his head are many crowns, and in righteousness does he judge and make war.

Heb. i. 1.

Rev. xix.

14.

'Twas



1 Pet. i. 41. 'Twas he who inspir'd their prophets; the spirit  
 Heb. xi. 28. of Christ that was in them did testifie the doctrine  
 that they were to preach: 'Twas he who quicken'd  
 their heroes: It is said, that through faith they  
 obtain'd kingdoms, waxed valiant in fight, and  
 turned to flight the armies of the aliens, that is,  
 by the faith of which *he* was first the *Author*, and  
 then the *Object*. This is the victory by which  
 they overcome the world, even their faith; so that  
 the doctrine or general proposition arising out of all  
 the stories of their battles and victories, is to this  
 purpose:

That Christ Jesus, God manifest in the flesh,  
 is he that raiseth up deliverers for his people, a-  
 gainst all the tyranny and wickedness by which they  
 suffer.

He was that Angel that appeared to *Gideon*: He  
 was that Lord who fir'd up all his courage with  
 the single turn of his eye: And if they could ex-  
 pect these favours from him *before* his incarnation,  
 what may we do *afterwards*, who have more sub-  
 Pro. viii. 29. stantial arguments; that he rejoyceth in the habi-  
 table parts of the earth, and his delights are among  
 Rev. xix. 13. the sons of men? for now at the head of his armies he  
 is cloathed with a vesture dipt in blood, and his name  
 is called the Word of God. If he was the God of  
*Israel*, *then*, the title appears with an additional evi-  
 dence *now*, that he has taken upon him the seed  
 of *Abraham*, and therefore his churches in the  
 new testament, who are call'd the Israel of God,  
 have as great a hope set before them, as those people  
 whom he brought out of the land of *Egypt*, and from  
 the house of bondage. This Lord is our Re-  
 deemer: This holy one of *Israel* is our King.

Ps. lxxxix. 18. I think my self bound in duty, upon this occa-  
 sion, to mention a few things, to establish your faith  
 in this doctrine of his Deity, and assist the im-  
 provement of that great work that he has wrought

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for our salvation ; that you may learn both to believe the truth, and contemplate the mercy ; you may take these three particulars :

1. He has all along asserted his universal monarchy. This he did of old : He rules by his power <sup>Pfal. lxvi.</sup> for ever ; his eyes behold the nations : 'Tis spoke of <sup>17.</sup> him as you see in the former verse, who turn'd the sea into dry land when they went through the flood on foot ; then did they rejoyce in him ; and it was foretold, he should have it after he was incarnate, accurs'd and crucified, when they gave him vinegar and gall to drink, and had divided his garments among them ; the Kingdom should be the <sup>xxii. 28.</sup> Lord's, and he be the governor among the nations. Now the evidence that he gives of this is sometimes meerly providential ; that is, the interest of religion has no concern in it ; but it's *usually* the overflowing of his care about those to whom he is the author of eternal salvation. The Lord has deliver'd them out of the mouth of the lion, and delivers them from every evil work, that he may bring them to his heavenly kingdom. <sup>2 Tim. iv. 16.</sup>

I shall under this head consider it in the former way as a meer evidence of his authority, which he may carry on without any regard to a peculiar people. We are call'd to acknowledge and magnifie his work, that men may behold afar off, when he breaks in pieces mighty men without number, <sup>Job xxxiv. 24.</sup> and sets others in their stead ; when he tumbles princes as mortar, and treads them out as the potter does the clay ; when he forms them either vessels to honour, or to dishonour, as it seems good to the potter to make them. This is what the scripture has enlarg'd upon, the power of a Redeemer over thrones and dominions ; that he raiseth up the beggar from the dust, and the needy from <sup>Pfal. cxlii. 7, 8.</sup> the dunghill, that he may set them on high with the



Luke i. 52. the princes of his people: He puts down the mighty from their seats, and exalts them of a low degree.

And this was so clear an article of faith to the *Jews*, that they own'd it in *Babylon* at the time when one would have thought their God had forsaken the earth: With him, says *Daniel*, is wisdom and might; he pulls down kings, and sets up kings; he changeth times and seasons. They preached this doctrine, and *Nebuchadnezzar* felt it; the seven years of horror that were appointed to him, made him know, that the most High rules in the kingdoms of men, and sets up over them whomsoever he will: He was to be taught in this dreadful way, (the light of truth was to shine out of a long darkness) that the heavens do rule, and may give kingdoms to the basest of men; and when his understanding returned to him, he blessed and extolled the most High, the King of heaven, whose kingdom is for ever and ever, and his dominion without end, whose works are truth, and his ways judgment; and, as he himself had found it, those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

There's no need to distinguish our blessed Lord out of this empire, that he has over the monarchies of the world; for the heathen kings are called to be wise, and the judges of the earth to be instructed; and not only to serve the Lord with fear, but to kiss the Son, lest he be angry. *Nebuchadnezzar* had seen a person walk in the midst of the fiery furnace, as a companion and friend with those three whom he had cast in thither; for in all their afflictions, their Saviour was afflicted, and this angel of his presence saved them. The form of this fourth person was like the Son of God; he had heard of him by that title from the *Jews*, and he calls him the God of *Shadrach*, *Mesbakh*, and *Abednego*; he owns no other God could deliver after this sort. By the word of

Psal. ii.  
11, 12.

Dan. iii.  
25.

Isa. lxiii. 9.

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of their testimony, who made no secret of their faith, he heard of him that ascended into heaven, and descended; he declared not only God's name, Pro. xxx. 21. but his Son's name. 'Twas a faith in Christ that quenched the violence of fire, and it was his name that struck out all this glory to it self, from the confusions in that kingdom, and the clashing of others.

This agrees to *Daniel's* next vision of him, in which he is called *the Son of man*, coming in the clouds of heaven, to the ancient of days, and there Dan. vii. 14. was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, that shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

That his chief empire is in the hearts of men, making them willing in the day of his power is true, but the whole government of providence is upon his shoulders; and therefore I think it is preaching Christ, when we remember the wonderful works that he has done, as well as the judgments Psal. cv. 5. of his mouth. It is the Lord that hath brought forth our righteousness; come and let us declare Jer. li. 10. in *Sion* the work of the Lord our God. When he proclaims deliverance to the captives, the opening of the Isa. lxi. 2. prison doors to them that are bound; it's the day of the vengeance of the Lord, and he is therefore to be feared, for cutting off the spirit of princes, and Psal. lxxvi. ult. being terrible to the kings of the earth.

2. He renewed his claim to this empire over the world, at a time when it was all obscured from his people, and denied by his enemies: He talks of having power over all flesh, when he suffered by the power of darkness, as a worm, and no man.

He knew that all things were given into his hands, John xiii. 3. when he rose from supper, and girded himself to wash the feet of his disciples; he gave them now

F

and



and then a few sketches of his omnipotence and government: Thus, the winds and the waves obeyed him, to let us see what he can do with all the other unruly parts of nature; for he that stills the noise of the seas, can do the same by the tumult of the people; his power over distempers shew'd an absolute monarchy; that, as the Centurion illustrates the case, he could say to one, go, and he goes; and to another, come, and he comes; and to every one of them as his servant, do this, and he does it: To him belong the keys of death and eternity; and if he bare witness to this truth, when it became him to be of no reputation, and appear in the form of a servant, what must we expect from him now, that he has taken to himself his great power and reign'd?

3. 'Tis a branch of the glory that belongs to his exalted state: He told the disciples what he will make his enemies to feel; that all power is given to him, both in heaven and in earth; thus they sing of him in their praises before the throne, that he is the faithful witness, the first begotten from the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth: he appears among them with a name written on his forehead, to be seen and read of all the court; and also, it's wrote in glorious letters upon his thigh, where he girds the sword that will maintain it; and it is this, that he is the King of kings, and Lord of lords: The armies that follow him in heaven do it under this title, and are therefore waiting to see it evident in floods of wrath, upon those that either deny his name, or abuse his people: Upon the crushing of that pride that appears, either in an infidel or a tyrant, there is a loud voice in heaven, saying, now is come salvation, and strength and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ.

By him kings reign; it does not signifie, that all of them reign by his grace or with his approbation;

Psal. xciii.

3.

Mat. xxviii

19.

Rev. v. 7.

xix. 13.

Rev. xii.

10.

Prov. viii.

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tion; for, in this sense, they set up kings, but not by him, and princes, but he knew it not; but wicked princes may be said to reign by him, as a sweeping pestilence does, or a raging fire, for there is no evil in the city, but the Lord has done it; the meaning is, that he has a particular concern in these governments: if they do any good, it is by his influence; if they are devourers of men, and despisers of justice, he shews himself to be the blessed and only potentate, not so much in his setting them up, as in pulling them down; for certainly, it's more the work of a Redeemer to dethrone a tyrant, than it is to advance one: 'Twas as much the Lord's doing to send *Nebuchadnezzar* among the cattle, as it was to give kingdoms and monarchies in a great bundle into his hand; it appear'd by his fall, rather than by his greatness, that the Most High rules in the kingdoms of men. 'Tis a nobler instance of his power over all flesh, to humble the pride of kings, than it is to gratifie their lust of empire. We are apt to question, whether the Lord reigns or no in the prosperity of a wicked ruler; but, when such a one is deposed from his kingly state, and driven out as a fugitive among the nations, then his judgments are manifest.

Hof. viii.

4.

Dan. v. 20.

'Tis he who puts it into the hearts of people, to set them up, and this is the most significant argument of their being *his anointed*: We hear his voice by the voice of consenting nations; 'tis no other way that we can apprehend the notion of a speaking God, than by the turn that he has given to the hearts of men. The divine right of a person we can only know by the flowing of the nations to it: Thus was our king proclaimed at the revolution, by the shouts of a willing people, the blessing of those that were ready to perish; with the cries of desire, and joy to the man that sav'd them; and loud Hosannah's to the God that sent him. My



Jud. v. 9. heart is towards the governors of *Israel*, who offer'd themselves willingly among the people, praise ye the Lord.

That work and counsel is not of God that comes to nought; the event it self is enough to determine that is not the counsel of the Lord, for then it would stand. I hope we may venture to say that the *revolution* is of God, if a prosperity of thirty seven years may be call'd a standing, and especially under the long views, that a fruitful house has given us; tho' I do not say this to make you secure; blaspheming runs higher now than ever, especially against the name of Christ; concealing his deity is to go for charity, denying it for free-thinking; and I suppose lampooning it will set up for wit; but he whom some are ashamed to confess, and others are not ashamed to revile, is the Most High over all the earth; He, as the King of kings, did, in our deliverance, give us a king of his own chusing, a man after his own heart.

And again, when thrones are polluted with luxury, profaneness and blood; when the laws are made a sacrifice to cruelty, and the gospel to banter, when this is an iniquity that proceeds from the ruler, it's the hand of God that pulls him down; he does it both with a declaration, and a pity to his own name: nor can I be silent to the praises of our great Redeemer at the return of a day, on which he has engraven his political glories. I don't pretend to canvass the right of kingdoms, or poise the titles of princes; 'tis pity that ministers of the gospel should be grasping at a power of decision, which the world will never let them have, and Christ has never bid them take. These doctrines are not to be determined in pulpits, but in parliaments; and it signifies nothing what yokes of bondage the priests may prepare, it's certain, without a spirit of infatuation, the people will never put them on.

But

But my design is to contemplate the great Redeemer, as riding in the chariots of salvation, and sounding forth his mighty name to the terror of enemies, and the surprize of those that waited for him. His hand appear'd in the whole course of the revolution; when the people willingly offered themselves, we saw the power and goodness of the Lord *Jesus*, on whose arm the nation was made to trust. When we had fallen under the loads of superstition and tyranny, he rais'd us up a person in a way as like that which he took with *Gideon*, as matters at such a distance can be supposed to be.

1. The substance of the mercy, and the errand of the person whom God inspired for it, was the same with that of *Israel*; that we might not have our religion devoured with caterpillars, and our liberties with locusts, as the story before us is told of the *Midianites*: when human laws were the only argument for a human gospel, and things that God never commanded were to be propos'd by ways that he never allow'd; then he ordained his arrows against persecutors, and truly when they were so ordained they flew home; his providence was not a deceitful bow, things were turned again into their right channel from a long confusion. For several years the most faithful ministers were in prisons, and little else but trifles and bondage heard from pulpits; persecution had turn'd dens of thieves into houses of prayer, and superstition had made houses of prayer to be dens of thieves; darkness lay all over the land, when the Spirit of God began to move upon the face of the waters. Some of you remember that affliction, the wormwood and the gall.

2. The remarkable furniture both of capacity and inclination, that was given to the hero of that cause, is an argument that he came to save us in the name of the Lord. I shew'd in a sermon up-



on these words, the last year, what difficulties lay in the way, both from the greatness of the danger and the many infirmities of the person: He had no necessity to extend his dominions, no temptation to catch at a name, of which there was not a common view of transmitting to any posterity; he felt all the tender affections of a nephew and a son; he knew the reproaches that would be fetched from these titles, to represent his conduct as unnatural; and they could never have been over-rul'd but by an influence that was supernatural; he knew the powers of gratitude, relation, pity and integrity; and as he never could act against them, so he was aware of malevolent insinuations; but he laid his fame where he laid his life, at the feet of *Jesus*.

He came in the dead of winter, that our salvation might have the more early spring, and the earth not yield her fruits till we had a right to eat them: He run the hazard of his life at sea, as well as in the field, and under a great deal of sickness was sent of God with a saving health to these nations: His passage was very swift from a bed to a boat, from that to a camp, and from that to a throne; for indeed where it's the work and cause of Christ, he will carry it through; and if nature is beneath the design, something else shall do it; for when he gives a Spirit, the weak shall say I am strong.

3. I must not forget one thing, which is now turned as a reproach upon that mighty man of valour, as well as those who find an indearment in his memory, and that is, he firmly believed, and always relied on the eternal Deity, and continual providence of a Redeemer; he made no secret of his faith, either in words or actions. At the time that our captivity was turn'd, the spirit of religion, as well as courage, became the glory of our land; the name of the Lord was heard among us,

us, and the shout of the king that he had chosen went before us.

I have read with grief and surprize, a few little flurs upon a prince, whom the King of heaven delighted to honour; he is said to be *unhappy in his education*, and so in contempt is call'd a *predestinarian* and an *enthusiast*; and indeed these names fit easier upon *me*, after so great a man has had them. 'Tis pity that ever he should be censured by any member of the *church of England*; for I believe the doctrine of *predestination* was never laid down in fuller terms in any confession in all the world, than in the seventeenth article of her faith, which ought, by no means, to be subscrib'd by those that do not believe it, because that is carrying a lie in their right hands. The distinction by which they excuse themselves would make the soul of an honest man to shiver and tremble, that they subscribe them not as articles of *truth*, but of *peace*; they had better have called them articles of preferment, and what they own not from conscience but from covetousness, as if they thought that gain was godliness.

However, the enemies themselves being judges, the person whom they voted to be the head of their church, believed what he subscrib'd, and subscrib'd what he believed; but it makes the church look too much like *Nebuchadnezzar's* image, where the head was fine gold (tried in the fire) and the lower parts of brass, and iron and clay. The prince always acted with reverence to what he was taught; he knew these doctrines had ever been the delight of his illustrious house, and only opposed by such as were treacherous to his family, and perfidious to their native country; an *Arminian* party and a *French* faction were but two names for the same people.

I can



Dr. Bur-  
net Bp. of  
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I cannot come into the objection that is made by a late learned *prelate*, (whose kindness to me was very great, whilst he liv'd, and whose memory will be always dear) that by these notions he was *slothful and unactive*; the reverse of this character I would give you not from a single action or two, but there is an uninterrupted argument runs thro' his whole life, and we need not lay any more weight upon that observation, that I have made, than what may be collected from all the other parts of the Bishop's own history.

4. I would observe with what eminence of value the most high God continued his reign for several years, to do the greatest and best of things for this nation, not only whilst he liv'd, but even after he was dead. The providence that he always own'd made him the terror of an over-grown monarchy, the soul of the grand alliance in *Europe*, and the root of the protestant succession in *Great Britain*; and it's very remarkable that though we have seen men of the highest fame, both in the field and the bench outlive their reputation, and like an expiring candle, burn a while with a twinkling light before they went out; it seems to be the peculiar of King *William* to finish his main design, and die in the full blaze of glory.

But we are not to put our trust in the best of princes, nor in the son of man, his breath is gone forth, he has returned to his earth; happy therefore is the man who has *Jesus* the God of *Jacob* for his help, and whose hope is in the Lord his God, 'tis he that manages every providence.

I should now have considered *the way* in which he struck a new life into *Gideon*, he look'd upon him, and said, go in this thy might, have not I sent thee; and the glorious *victory* that follow'd. 'Twas in such a way that we had our deliverer, and in such a way that he had his reputation; but the time has

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has fail'd me, and these things must be defer'd to be given you as another portion of meat in some due season. I know not better how to direct your improvement of these particulars, than by leading you back to the doctrine from whence I set out, that *Jesus* who is the King of saints, is the King of nations; therefore stay your selves upon your God, in his name set up your banners, thro' him you will ever do valiantly, he it is that shall tread down your enemies, and fire up your courage; be you faithful to his cause, and believe that he will be faithful to his word; he has display'd a banner before them that fear him, because of his truth; this is our God for ever and ever, and he will be our guide untill death.



G SERMON





# SERMON III.

Preach'd *November 5, 1726.*

To a Society of CATECHUMENS in  
*Silver-Street.*

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JUDGES vi. 14.



Have already in two sermons considered the salvation of *Israel*, by the hands of *Gideon*, with an eye to the great *Revolution*, that providence has made the corner stone to our whole inheritance of religion and liberty; they were secured by it, and they continue to be established upon it.

There are three transient observations that arise from the story at large.

*First*, That there is a hidden life in the cause of God, when it appears to be run low and even dead in the eyes of men; Christ seems to say, can these dry bones live? and we may return the question  
back

back again; Lord, thou knowest. Thus we read in the holy scriptures, in the book of the wars of the Lord, and as we have heard, so we have seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God, that he will establish it for ever; we have thought of these loving kindneses in the midst of his temple, and discovered so much of *our* case in that of the *Jews*, as if *Great Britain* was become the *Israel* of God, a people near unto him; praise ye the Lord.

Psal. xlviii.  
8, 9.

*Secondly*, You may farther observe, that when providence has any great work upon the wheels, if it cannot find an instrument, it will make one, *Gideon* is called from the threshing floor to the field of battle.

*Moses* is fetched from the flock in *Midian*, to be head in *Jeshurun*, and *David* is removed from the like post at *Bethlehem*, to head the armies of the living God.

*Thirdly*, The way that he takes in raising up heroes for his cause, is, by doing great things *within them*. When he calls them to it, the words that he speaks, they are spirit, they are life: He look'd upon *Gideon* and said, go in this thy might, and thou shalt save *Israel* out of the hands of the *Midianites*, have not I sent thee?

This is properly the doctrine of the text before us, the very thing we are to contemplate in it; and it seems to be a monument, that God has set up in our revolution, a pillar of truth, that our fathers have seen and known, and our children are to remember.

'Twas not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts, that the great mountain became a plain; we had a change of kings, a revival of state, our laws rescued from tyranny, and our gospel from darkness, not by superior armies,

Zech. iv. 7.



armies, the thunder of battles, garments roll'd in blood, the groans of the slain, or the shouts of the conqueror, but the whole impression was made upon the hearts of men; the stout hearted slept their sleep, none of the men of might could find their hands, at the rebuke of our God both chariots and horses were still; by the greatness of his arm they sunk, as lead in the mighty waters. The complete deliverance of this nation, was not like the fall of towers and castles, which is brought about with violence and noise; but rather like the turn of the tide, that seems to run up the river, as naturally as ever it ran down.

Psal. lxxvi.

5, 6.

Exod. xv.

10.

There are two things, that you ought to distinguish in this account of a salvation, both as it belongs to *Israel*, and as it may be transferred to *England*.

*First*, You see whose work it was.

*Secondly*, What sort of a work it is.

1. The story is plain, and so should our application of it be, that no other than the Lord or *Jehovah*, was able to make *Gideon* so great a man, by the use of so little an action; nothing less could either be said or done to him, than a person's looking on him, and nothing greater could be done in him, and for him, than by this means, to give him a commission, and capacity to execute the vengeance of the Lord, and the redemption of his people.

Psal. lxxvi.

8, 10.

Rev. xv. 4.

I proved by the titles given to this *person*, and the actions recorded of him, that he could be no other than the most high God; there is none like unto him, nor any works to be compared with his, he only does wonderful things, he is God alone. The divine nature runs through the whole providence; to him alone it does appertain; he is to be feared and glorified, when his judgments are made so manifest; and yet we may say of this story.

as you ought to do of the whole conduct towards that people, that it was under the care and government of the Son of God.

He appeared to their patriarchs, their prophets, and heroes, who afterwards should be manifest in the flesh; the government was upon his shoulders, the Father committed the whole judgment to him then, as he will do at the end of world; so that it is Christ Jesus by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice; he, in his own times, is pleased to show who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords; it belongs to him, who is the faithful witness, the first begotten from the dead, to be the Prince of the kings of the earth; he was the Captain of the hosts of the Lord to *Joshua*, the Angel of the Lord to *Gideon*, as he appeared to be the God of glory to *Abraham*: They conversed with him then, as a way-faring man; and when he was made flesh, and dwelt amongst them, it was said to the cities of Judah, behold your God. 'Tis to him our faith goes up, who has girded his sword upon his thigh, and rides in the chariots of salvation; not only followed by the armies in heaven, but felt, and own'd by those on earth.

Isa. ix. 6.

Prov. viii.

15.

1 Tim. vi.

15.

Rev. i. 7.

Jof. v. 14.

the Lord to *Joshua*, the Angel of the Lord to *Gideon*, as he appeared to be the God of glory to *Abraham*: They conversed with him then, as a way-faring man; and when he was made flesh, and dwelt amongst them, it was said to the cities of Judah, behold your God. 'Tis to him our faith goes up, who has girded his sword upon his thigh, and rides in the chariots of salvation; not only followed by the armies in heaven, but felt, and own'd by those on earth.

Acts vii. 1.

John i. 14.

Isa. xl. 9.

Rev. xix.

13.

But I will not return upon that argument now, that Christ Jesus was the God of *Israel*, and that he is the governor among the nations, that all kingdoms are the Lord's: The farther service that the text demands from me, is, not to consider *who* he is, but *what he does*, when religion is clouded, and liberty is fainting away.

II. You read of an action, that would have passed for very little from any besides him; that he *looked on Gideon*, and yet there are three things contained in it.

1. The qualification that he received, go in this thy might.

2. The



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2. The success of which he was assur'd, thou shalt save *Israel* out of the hands of the *Midianites*.

3. The commission, by which he was empower'd, have not I sent thee? I shall proceed therefore upon these things in the following method :

1. Consider the action itself, God's *looking* on him.

2. The explication he gave of it, and the consequence that he united to it; a courage in his heart, victory for his arms, and a divine warrant in his hand.

1. What it is, that Christ Jesus, as the God of *Israel*, did to furnish, to encourage, and to authorize *Gideon* in the rescue of his people, from the hands of the *Midianites* : *He looked upon him*. There are three general observations, that I would give you upon this affair, before I open the particular instructions, that the Holy Spirit conveys to us by it.

1. That it appears but little in the eyes of men. Yet,

2. That by such contemptible means, God loves to carry on the interest of his own glory. And,

3. That there is something very mysterious in the account, that is rather to be ador'd than explain'd.

(1.) We must own that a story so told would be very contemptible in the eyes of men. Human wisdom expects a pompous train of means in proportion to the greatness of the end ; *Naaman* the Syrian did but act as all unbelievers do in the things of God, he had no *objective evidence*, as some people love to speak, nothing to convince his reason, that washing seven times in the river *Jordan* should cure him of his leprosy : And therefore, when he receives those orders, after he had taken a long journey, he is an example how much a carnal mind is enmity against God, and receives not either his com-

Rom. viii.

7.

commandments or his promises, because they are foolishness to him ; he went away in anger, raging and reasoning, *Behold, I thought he would surely come out to me, and call upon the name of the Lord his God, and strike his hand on the place, and recover the leper.* 2 King. v. 11, 12.  
*Are not Abana and Pharphar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?* Indeed so they may, for any thing I know ; nor could there be any argument from mere reason, why he should not go and wash in them, and be clean.

Thus natural is it for men to hate salvation it self, because they cannot submit to the way of it : but that person found it, as all infidels shall do, either in mercy or in vengeance, that the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. As his servants tell him, had the prophet bid him do some great thing, he would have done it ; but he comes to know upon experience, that the less magnificence there is in the means, the greater redound of glory ariseth to him that commands them. So we read of *Elijah*, that as he passed by *Elisba*, who was plowing, he only cast his mantle upon him : this would hardly be minded by those who attended the eleven yoke of oxen that went before him, as he followed with the twelfth ; but to *him* it was a new life, he is quite another man, he is for taking leave of all relations at once, that he may be at liberty for a service to which he had no manner of education. *Elijah* says to him, go back again, what have I done to thee ? Indeed this is what he could not talk of ; but he felt it, it reach'd his very soul, and forc'd him in a moment to a new character in the world. 1 Cor. i. 25. 1 Kings xix. 19.

When God sent *Moses* away out of *Midian*, he gave him an experiment of the miracles that he should work, as well as instructions about the doctrines he should say ; this was magnificent and con-



convincing; but what was there in his *looking* upon *Gideon*? how could either he himself be encouraged, or others be persuaded by that, that he should save *Israel* out of the hands of the *Midianites*.

And thus contemptible is the way that he takes for the great salvation of all, and that is preaching the Cross of Christ; no excellency of speech, or wisdom of words: The *Greeks*, they *desired wisdom*, that they might see Christianity was agreeable to that pride of learning, for which they were so much admir'd; because the apostle did not gratify 'em with schemes and conjectures, with philosophy and vain deceit, they call him a babbler; but the plain testimony of God, the doctrine that had no other rise but his revelation, no other evidence but his authority; by this foolishness of preaching he is pleased to save them that believe; and thus has he made foolish the wisdom of this world, and taken them in their own craftiness.

1 Cor. ii. 2.  
1 Cor. iii. 19.

(2.) It is usual with him to do those things that are the greatest, by those means that are the least, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of man. There are no actions so diminutive as a *touch*, a *word*, or a *look*; and yet by such as these has the glory of our God been declared, and his purposes established.

Thus you read, if he does but *touch* the mountains, they shall smoke; he is said to walk upon the wings of the wind, to tread upon the high places of the earth, to put forth his hand, and either give life, or take it away: 'Twas thus that he acted in the days of his flesh; if he did but lay his hand on the sick, they recover'd; when he put clay upon the eyes of the blind man, he saw every thing clearly; 'twas not the clay, but the potter; not the medicine, but the physician who was of great value. Nay, we read, that when others only had an opportunity of *touching* the very hem of his

his garment; they were made whole; their faith was strong in an action that reason would have despised; virtue went from him, as the people found who received it: so that, as the natural man makes great things little, a believer, by his experience, knows little things to be great.

The same may be said of a word, how minute and feeble is the breath that goes forth? it sounds one moment, and sinks away the next; and yet, by no more than the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth: He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. And no wonder that he shew'd this power among men, commanding the unclean spirits with his word; who had created the glorious angels, by no more than saying, *Let them be*. Thus he discharged infirmities and sickness, and did upon earth, as he used to do from heaven; he sent out his word, and healed them. 'Twas with no more pains than this, that he raised the dead, saying only with a loud voice, *Lazarus, come forth*: And with the same expedition will he produce the resurrection at the last day; for they that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and they that hear shall live.

Psal.  
xxxiii. 6.

Joh. xi. 39.

And the like observations we have upon his looking: sometimes we read of ours to him, sometimes of his to us: He calls the ends of the earth to do no more than to look unto him, and be saved.

Isa. xlii. 25.

And of how many may it be said, they look'd to him, and were lighten'd, and their faces were not ashamed?

Psal. xxxiv.  
5.

Thus Moses hung the brazen serpent on high in the wilderness, and every one that could see him was healed: And in like manner is the Son of man lifted up. *Jonah* had no more than this for it, when his soul fainted in the belly of hell; I said, I am cast out of thy sight, yet will

Joh. iii. 14.

Jon. ii. 4.



I look again towards thy holy temple. The virtue is not in the action, but in the object upon which it fixes. Thus, when the Jews come to  
 Zech. xii. look upon him whom they have pierced, it will  
 10. produce a general mourning among them, like that of *Hadadrimmon* in the valley of *Megiddon*. 'Twas only a look from him that made *Zaccheus* a convert, *Peter* a penitent, and *Gideon* a captain. He has sometimes expressed himself this way by terrible things in righteousness. Thus, when the *Egyptians* hurried into the red sea after the *Israelites*, the Lord looked on their hosts; and, as he made their chariot-wheels go heavily; so, by the same easy action, he makes others run like the chariots of *Aminadib*.

This is all the account that is given us of their perseverance in building the city and the temple, when they came from *Babylon*; informers, revilers, powerful and crafty foes did whatever they could to hinder 'em: And what had that feeble company in balance to so much opposition? No more than  
 Ezr. v. 3. this, and indeed that was enough, *the eye of their God* was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease: when he darts out a virtue, when he looks with healing in his eyes; it's no matter what the means or instruments are. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation. The Lord will hasten it in his time. 'Tis not what he *finds* them, but what he *makes* them. In that day, he that is weak shall be as *David*; and he that is as *David*, as the angel of the Lord.

(3.) You must own, from the sound of these words, and the odness of the phrase, that there is  
 Psal. cvi. 2. a mystery in it. Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can shew forth all his praise? He does marvellous things that we cannot comprehend, his judgments are unsearchable, and his ways  
 past

## The Charge of GOD to GIDEON.

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past finding out. Who can explain the virtue that came from the hem of his garment, that heal'd an infirmity, a plague of twelve years, in one minute? We are told thus it was, by the historian, as the multitude were by the people who received it. But are we not to believe it till we have *clear ideas*? Is there not something in it incomprehensible? Is our faith to be at a stand, and a Redeemer's glory in suspense, till our hearts are haughty, and our eyes lofty? till reason has behaved itself proudly, and been exercised in matters too high for it? Will any one say of his *works*, as some have dar'd to do of his *being*, his distinction from the Father, and his union to him? "In this enlighten'd age Mr. of search and inquiry, men will not be satisfy'd Watts's " to hear us make use of inexplicable and myste- preface to " rious terms, and tell them that the sense of them Mr.Scott's " is never to be known; they will not think that Sermon. " doctrine can be of so much importance to us, " which must be wrapt up in perpetual darkness, " and can never be understood."

For my part, I read the wonders of his arm as I do those of his essence, and believe them both upon mere revelation. And if persons will not own, that a virtue came from him, and healed the people, till they and I can explain what that virtue was, and what operation it had; if they will run down the evangelist for *wrapping up a story in darkness*, and giving us no idea of the *modus* how such a cure was wrought; I cannot help it: 'Tis enough for me that God has said it, and God has done it; and it argues a carnal mind, if we do not stop where he does, and believe him upon his own bare word: He that believes not the record, has made God a liar. Joh. v. 10.

I should think it as gross nonsense, to talk of giving rational schemes about a *mystery*, as it is of giving them about a *miracle*. What nature is able



to perform, is no miracle, and what it is able to *perform*, is no mystery. I'm sure these ways of our God are past finding out; all our inquiries about them are only like getting a thousand miles nearer to the sun; if we could do it we should be no wiser, but much sooner be fired than enlightened. 'Tis daring and impious, when any *break through to gaze*; the men of *Bethshehem* had a mind to look into the ark, and no doubt imagined, after that, they should have more *distinct ideas* of it, that was *an age of search and inquiry*; but it cost above fifty thousand of them their lives.

1 Sam. vi.  
19.

We can give no account of natural courage (tho' we know some men have it more than others) whether it's in the nerves or in the blood, or in the brain; and yet, it's sure enough, that there are mighty men of valour, whom he who formed the spirit of man within him, has raised up according to his own pleasure; and we may be as positive, that persons out of weakness, have been made strong, and above an ordinary course of nature; have waxed valiant in fight; that new service has brought new dispositions along with it; the man that opens his mouth against these facts, must shut his eyes upon the world.

But is there any accounting for it? *Gideon* was afraid that the *Midianites* should know of the wheat that he was threshing, and yet he who makes a secret of the flail, makes none of the sword; so that though I read such a text as this with pleasure, yet if I labour to find it out, it is too wonderful for me, and I cannot attain unto it. Nevertheless,

(4.) There are some general notes that we may put upon it, and tho' they do not reach the full sense of the word, yet they carry our thoughts so far, as to encourage a believer's hope and trust, upon any return of danger. If he was able to raise up a thresher of wheat into a general, a prince, a conqueror, only by looking

ing on him, we may conclude that he can give qualifications,

1. In the swiftest way as to us.

2. In the easiest as to himself.

3. It appears to be most friendly and gracious.

4. 'Tis divine and heavenly.

(1.) When he quickens and animates the soul of a person by a *single look*, his word runs very swiftly: He performs his counsel all at once, there is no slow train of preparations; no length of time taken in removing impediments, and laying in a sett of principles, but he only creates a hero, as he created the world; saying, let there be light, and there is so. Gen. i. 3.

The schemes of tyranny are contrived and laboured out by degrees it must be ripening for several ages, before they fill up the measure of their iniquity; but when they are come to their perfection, they tumble in a moment; by the blast of God they perish; by the breath of his nostrils they are confounded; thus shall *Babylon* fall, in one hour shall all their riches come to nought; for strong is the Lord God that judges her. A revolution is a sort of a resurrection, and is done with the same glorious expedition that the other shall be, in a moment; in the twinkling of an eye, the dead are changed, and mortality swallowed up of life. Rev. xviii. 17. 1 Cor. xv.

What a support is this to those who are trembling for the ark of God; and conclude, that there must be a great deal of time to unravel a mystery of iniquity; that has been so long a weaving? Remember to your comfort, that when the Lord is revealed, he destroys the man of sin, with the breath of his mouth, and with the brightness of his coming; he did so at the reformation, the day star from on high, visited the nations that sat in darkness, and saw no light; though the empire of ignorance, and superstition was gross and tedious, yet, how many



many lights did Christ set up in those dark places? It was scarce well begun in *Germany*, before the isles afar off, the utmost parts of the earth, had the joyful sound among them, even glory to the righteous.

And thus sudden was our deliverance at the *revolution*: When the Lord turned again the captivity of *Sion*, we were like them that dreamed; our tongue was filled with laughter, almost, before our thoughts could understand the mercy; when judges had crucified our laws, and troops of hungry ruffians were a falling too upon our lives, in the space of a few days, judgment returned unto righteousness, and all the upright in heart followed after it. In as little a time as the *Israelites* had to hear the *Egyptians* roaring at the bank of the river, and to see them floating upon the waters, did we lament our danger, and behold the great salvation of the Lord; we were deliver'd after the manner of *Egypt*; and thus the promise runs, that the Lord will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness, for a short work will the Lord make in the earth.

Pf. cxxvi.  
2, 3.

Psa. xciv.  
17.

Rom. ix.  
28.

The plots of two bloody reigns were blown up in a little more than two happy weeks, and the throne of iniquity, that had established mischief by so many laws, fell down before the man whom God had ordained to tread upon princes like mortar, and make the desolate places like the garden of the Lord; 'twas not long a doing; before *Sion* travelled, she brought forth; and before her pains came upon her, she was delivered of a man child. 'Tis a slower thing in the common course of war to take a town, than we found it was to drive out a king, to humble an army, and redeem a nation.

Sometimes the thickest darkness is a little before the dawn of light; but that is no bondage upon the sun; he comes out of his chamber with a cheerful glory,

Psal. xix.  
5.

glory, and rejoyceth as a strong man to run his race. And thus it will be again, when truth fails; when the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing. God lets it alone, as he does the night, but still the sun knows its rising; he will open the eyelids of the morning, and cause the day-star to know its place, and so the mercy comes at once. 'Tis one discovery of our *polite age*, that the light is a body that moves by degrees; which may be so, for any thing that I know: But when these calculators own, that is above a thousand miles in a minute, I shall never dispute their reckoning; I am sure it runs faster than I can think: and we need not stretch ourselves beyond our measure. 'Tis a proper similitude for a national deliverance.

Isa. lix. 15.

Psal. ii. 1.

(2.) When he furnishes a person for the great things of his kingdom and providence by a *look*, 'tis to put us in mind how easy a work it is to him. Indeed we are never to conceive of difficulties in the way of Omnipotence. The Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary, and there is no searching of his understanding: But he useth this language to let us know, that deliverance is no more toil to him than a look is to us; he does it with the cast of his eye. We are apt to poise and measure the value of second causes; and if we find that danger weighs heavier in one scale than hope does in another, we look no higher than the creation to bring on a balance. But faith has another way of reckoning; and therefore believeth in hope and against hope, resting entirely upon this argument, that what God has promised, he is able to perform.

Isa. xl. 28.

Rom. iv.

18.

This shews us how much there is for faith to do in a time of danger; and how little there is for hope to fear. As God says, if the deliverance be marvelous in the eyes of this people, should it be

Zech. viii.

6.

mar-



marvelous also in mine eyes, saith the Lord of hosts? Thus it seemed to be no toil of providence, when, at the revolution, all the ways of relief were confounded at home, to fetch us a captain of salvation from abroad, and make him a king where he had never been a subject. God did not tie the hands of the people, but rather turn'd their hearts; they receiv'd their happiness by an inward conviction that came as the light does, that strikes the eye without ever hurting it.

(3.) Such a way of preparing a person for the service of a country, by *looking upon him*, appears to be most friendly and gracious; it proclaimed Gideon to be a man greatly beloved; an *Israelite* indeed; who had power both with God and man, and prevailed: I have long since proved in one of these anniversary sermons called *Theocracy*, that the judges were all of them good men; eminent believers; strong in faith, giving glory to God; their blemishes were pardoned, their backslidings were healed; as I cannot but conclude, from the way that the apostle takes to roll up their names; that through faith the elders obtained a good report, and when the time fail'd him to describe their several glories, he crouts a number of them in one verse, some of whom have the chief character for saints as well as champions, *Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David*, also *Samuel* and the prophets; these men through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stop't the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Would *Samson* and *Jephthah* have been talk'd of in this promiscuous way with *David, Samuel*, and the prophets, and that under the head of faith, if they had not obtained the like precious faith?

And

And, therefore, what can you think of that *ill report* that is given of them, who through faith have four thousand years obtained a *good one*? A certain author, with a wanton air, has call'd them "the rash champions of heaven, the rude " and bloody ministers of providence; and makes " a question, which God never gave any man " leave to put, whether ever they got to glory at " all?" The words *heaven* and *providence* ought to have been left out in this scurrility: to talk of their *rashness*, and yet intimate that this was from *heaven*, is making Christ the author of sin: To call them *rude* and *bloody*, and to suppose in this they were *ministers of providence*, is really to forget what the word providence means; that it is God's wise and holy disposal of his creatures, and their actions. I have formerly, upon the return of this day, had occasion to shew my contempt of an author who could talk of *rebellious saints*, *godly traitors*, and a great deal more of these jumbled names, that seem'd to be chosen on purpose to make the titles of saints and holiness ridiculous: And really, I think that the words *heaven* and *providence* are as much set out to the banter of the world by this trifling air, that favours more of corrupt communication than that which is good, to the use of edifying; and that ministers grace to the hearers.

'Tis an odd charity that can be so tender to infidelity, and will not only deny, but lampoon the good report that goes along with faith: nor is this an unguarded slip of anger; but the ridicule is brought over again in another book, printed a year after; when speaking of *Samson* and *Jephtha*, he calls them those " rude heroes, who spent their " days in bloody work, in hewing down the *Philistines* and the *Ammonites*." I repeat these passages with concern, as I could not read them without trembling; and what farther plunder we may

Mr. Watts's first volume of sermons, pag. 384.

Mr. Luke Milburn.

Funeral sermon on Sir John Hartopp, p. 126.



see upon the Bible I cannot tell, when such flings of wit are used against men whom the God of Heaven delighted so to honour.

The advances to Deism are very great, when such as the apostle embalm'd in the rolls of faith are condemned to a portion with hypocrites and unbelievers; when *Samson* and *Jephtha* are struck out from among the saints, and *David* no longer suffer'd to be our Psalmist; we are preparing the way for all the contempt of men against the book of God. We should never pretend a value for the Bible, if we can allow ourselves to give a *bad report* of those that for several ages have obtain'd a good one. But let us look with esteem at those upon whom God himself look'd with spirit and life. Let us honour the names which he has distinguished, and never venture to call those *rash* and *bloody*, who fought no other battels than what he obliged them to, and fitted them for. 'Tis in the book of God, that the righteous are to be had in everlasting remembrance; there their names are exalted with honour. And must they be the objects of our ridicule, whom he has handed over to renown and glory? Men that delivered nations, that wrought righteousness, and obtained so many promises; such as employ'd their time in something better than speculation and jingling, ought never to be made the laughter of fools.

(4.) This raising up a champion, by looking upon him, shews the work to be *all divine*. Here is a heavenly treasure in an earthen vessel. And it is thus ordered in providence, as it is in the gospel, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of man. When persons are raised to a level with things that were so much above them, it's plainly the doing of the Lord, and ought to be marvellous in our eyes.

## The Charge of GOD to GIDEON.

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This was the case of *Israel*, when the *Midianites* had oppressed them seven years; they were sunk in their spirits as well as their affairs: the greatest part of them had run into the idolatry of their wicked masters. *Joash* himself, *Gideon's* father, had not only raised up an altar for *Baal*, but planted a grove. And when his son had a divine order to throw it down, he fear'd not only the men of the city, but his father's household: and because he durst not venture to do it by day, he did it by night: And in the morning, when the grove was cut down, and the altar overturn'd, the men of the city are so concern'd, that they are for putting to death him that did it.

But when God has a work to do, he will rush through all opposition; the very man who had planted this grove, and set up this altar, is a swift witness against them. And one would wonder that a reason that came so late, should be so full; *Will any man plead for Baal? If he be a God, let him plead for himself.* And he is so far from being ashamed of his son, that he gives him a new name, and calls him *Jerubbaal*, for the havock that he had made in a domestick idolatry. After this noble entrance, the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon *Gideon*; and when he blew the trumpet in *Abiezer*, the inhabitants of the tribes were gather'd after him.

There are three things in which God himself gave an exposition of *this look*, and told him what he meant by it.

1. His qualification: Go in this thy might.
  2. His success: Thou shalt deliver *Israel* out of the hands of the *Philistines*.
  3. His commission: Have not I sent thee?
1. Whenever he takes these methods with a person, he gives what he calls for: He looked upon him, and said, Go in *this thy might*. He had nei-



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ther inclination nor capacity for the business of war ; there was not a spear or a shield seen among  
 Jud. v. 8. forty thousand in *Israel*. The angel who spake to him in the shape and figure of a man, that is, the angel of the covenant, the Lord of hosts gave him a *promise* and a *character* ; the Lord is with  
 Jud. vi 12. thee, thou mighty man of valour. *Gideon* had not faith enough to take in either of these, but first opposeth to this promise the miseries that overwhelmed their nation : Oh my Lord, if the Lord  
 ver. 13. be with us, why is all this evil befallen us ? and where be all the miracles that our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up out of *Egypt* ? But now the Lord has forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the *Midianites*.

And then, as to his being a mighty man of valour, it's rather propheticall of what the Angel would make him, than an account of the temper in which he found him ; for says he, wherewith shall  
 ver. 15. I save *Israel*, behold my family is poor in *Manasseh*, and I the least in my father's house : But all this is answered, when the Angel tells him, surely  
 ver. 16. *I will be with thee*, and thou shalt smite the *Midianites*, as one man. *God with us* has been the standing motto of those that went forth conquering, and to conquer. When *Gideon* saw who this was, he says, I shall surely die, because I have seen the Angel of the Lord ; by which it is evident, that he did not look upon him as a created Angel, for there were thousands of these that appeared at mount *Sinai* ; but he thought (in analogy to the faith of God's elect) that this was the great majesty of heaven and earth, who hath said that no  
 Ex. xxxiii. flesh shall see me and live ; well, God answers him,  
 20. as he did *Manoah*, thou shalt not surely die ; and then, as *Gideon* begun with pulling down one altar, he shews his establishment in the faith, by setting up another, and calling it *Jehovah shalom* ; that is, the  
 the

the Lord is our peace. We may say in the affairs of the gospel, and in those of providence; who is sufficient for these things! What can a timorous temper, a sickly constitution, or little numbers do? We may answer, they shall do whatsoever God calls them to; for the Lord will perform his counsel, and execute his pleasure.

2. This assured him of success, though he had so few to follow him, yet, God thought them too many, and therefore orders him to give those leave to go, who were fearful and faint hearted; and there returned no less than twenty two thousand men, and left him only ten thousand in his army, and yet, there is to be another reform; he's reduced to three hundred; and their armour is as contemptible as their number, they had trumpets in their right hands, lamps and broken pitchers in their left; the broken pitchers were an emblem of their miserable condition, under the *Midianites*, shattered and good for nothing, and the lamps they held, were a figure of the glory within them, that the Spirit of God was at work in their hearts; this they understood by proclaiming with the sound of the trumpet; *the sword of the Lord and of Gideon.*

Thus came our deliverer, neither with numbers nor design to conquer this nation; ten times that force would never be able to invade us; and yet, the happy end was answered, we may say of *our* enemies, as it is of *theirs*, that at the meer sound of a trumpet, *all their host ran and cried, and fled.*

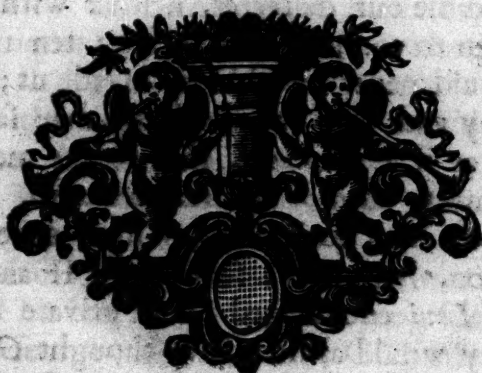
3. God, who looked upon him, gave him his commission, have not I sent thee? If any of the tribe of *Levi* encouraged those private altars to *Baal*, they would as little have thought *Gideon* acted *Fure Divino*, as perhaps the very priests of *Midian*; but he had his credentials without their leave, and therefore, above their censure: When God bestows both capacity and inclination to rescue a people,



*The Charge of GOD to GIDEON.*

people, the man whom he has thus looked upon  
 Joh. i. 13. *is the Lord's anointed*, he is born not of blood, nor  
 of flesh, nor of the will of man; but of God.

This is giving a prince, a *sacred Majesty* indeed;  
 declaring him to be a signet in God's right hand,  
 as we may say of him, who came to save us in  
 the name of the Lord: nor did it lie in the power  
 of invaders, or assassines, malecontents at home, or  
 Hag. ii. ult. armies abroad, to *pluck him thence*. Let these things  
 be remembred with praises for what is past, and  
 with resolution to set our hope in God for the  
 time to come; in new dangers, of what kind so-  
 ever they are, we may run to our old friend: thus  
 Ps. xliv. 4. says *David*, thou art my King of old, commanding  
 deliverance for *Jacob*: the residue of the Spirit is  
 with him; he can pour waters upon the thirsty,  
 and floods upon the dry ground; when he orders  
 them to beat their ploughshares into swords, and  
 their pruning hooks into spears, then shall the  
 weak say I am strong.



# *The Nature of FAITH:*

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Declared in a

## S E R M O N

*Novemb. 5. 1721.*

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By THOMAS BRADBURY.

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The SECOND EDITION, Corrected.

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Neque alium à me lucubrationis eventum expecto, quam ut  
magis ac magis inflammetur eorum rabies.

*Calvin. de Scandalis.*

Ut Christi Divinitatem clarè demonstrarem ex Scripturâ hujus-  
modi hominibus quid proficiam? Audacter scilicet quic-  
quid adduxero repudiabunt. Itaque tum sibi demùm vi-  
dentur ingeniosi, quum simplicitatem nostram rident; quod  
certâ fide amplectamur quæ demonstratione non tantum  
carent, sed humano judicio sunt incredibilia. —Mysterium  
audis, quod adores; non fabulam quam derideas; non  
monstrum, quod horreas. Scio frustrâ multis hæc dici;  
neque enim me lætet quibus hoc cachinnis excipiant. *ibid.*

Impias ac sacrilegas à Christo defectiones *intra Biennium* in  
natione una plures vidimus, quam narrant omnium tem-  
porum gentiumque historiæ. *ibid.*

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L O N D O N,

Printed in the Year M.DCC.XXVII.



The Nature of Faith

S E R M O N

Preached at St. Pauls Church, London, on the 17th of May, 1731.

By Thomas Bradbury.

The Second Edition, Corrected.

UPON THE NATURE OF FAITH, AS IT IS  
TOLD OF IN THE SCRIPTURES. AND  
THE MANNER OF THE GROWING THEREIN.  
IN A SERMON, PREACHED AT ST. PAULS  
CHURCH, LONDON, ON THE 17TH OF MAY,  
1731. BY THOMAS BRADBURY, M.A.  
OF THE SCHOOLS OF THE SAME CHURCH.  
THE SECOND EDITION, CORRECTED.  
LONDON, Printed by J. KNEELAND, at the  
Sign of the Anchor, in St. Dunstons Church-  
yard, 1732.

L O N D O N

Printed by J. KNEELAND, at the Sign of the Anchor, in St. Dunstons Church-yard, 1732.

And to show that this is universal religion, that it takes in all the practice and beauty of nobility.



Heb. xi. 13

*These all died in Faith.*



**A**s the nine first chapters of this epistle give us a large account of Jesus Christ, the object of the Christians faith; so the four last are an application of what we read concerning that glorious person. Our duty may be all summ'd up in the employment of that faith which is conversant with him. In our approaches to him, we must *draw nigh with a true heart, and ch.x. 22. a full assurance of faith.* In our avowance of him, we are to *hold fast the profession of that faith without ver. 23. wavering.* There are many that *draw back, denying ver. 38. the faith, either in language, or in practice: of these God saith, My soul shall have no pleasure in them.* The opposite to such a fatal course, is an hearty adherence to the truth and power of the gospel: *We are not of those that draw back to per- ver. 39. dition,*



dition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

And to shew 'em that this is universal religion, that it takes in all the practice and beauty of godliness, the apostle drives his argument home, by letting them see that it has been the character of God's people, ever since any of them were call'd out of the world: *By faith the elders obtained a good report.* *Ἐν ταύτῃ ἰμαρτυρήσαντες*, in this they have their testimony. They are noted down from age to age, for believers. Under the name of *elders*, he comprehends all those men of God, of whom we read in the old testament: he begins with *righteous Abel*, who died for God; then passes on to *Enoch, the seventh from Adam*, who walked with him: then comes down to *Noah*, who saw the end of one world, and (as a kind of second *Adam*) was the common father of another. Then he speaks more at large of *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*; those heroes in a life of faith, who mov'd about, conversing with promises, looking at futurities, and giving up all their meditations to an invisible state. And this was not only their employment whilst they lived, but *these all died in faith, not having receiv'd the Blessings that had been insured to them by the promises; but seeing them afar off, at the distance of many generations: however, they were persuaded of 'em as real and sure; they embraced them as dear and precious; and confessed themselves, that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.* Thus they lived, and thus they died, believing to the very last breath: there was but a moment's distance between faith and vision: the last thing they did in this world was to believe, to look thro' a promise, and to live upon it: and the first thing they met with in another, was the substance and glory of all their hopes.

This

This subject will give me an occasion to enquire,

I. What this *faith* is, that these good people lived and died with.

II. What it is to *die in Faith*; or how that grace is concerned in the last moments of a believer.

III. The Application.

I. I must give you some account of this *Faith*, by which the elders obtained so good a report, and have their names handed down to perpetual memory. We have it described in general terms, that it is *the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen*. You will observe by this account, that we may take the nature of Faith in two particulars.

*First*, It is to be considered in the *object* upon which it fixes. In general these are things *future* and *invisible*: For that reason it has no place in heaven: For, as the apostle saith of another grace, *hope that is seen, is not hope; for what a man seeth, why does he yet hope for?* Thus we cannot, with any propriety of language, be said to believe what we enjoy. The things with which our Faith has its greatest concern, must be absent; either their nature lying all in an invisible world; or, with respect to our possession, being reserved to a distant and future life. And under this distinction does the apostle tell us, *we walk by faith, and not by sight*. Yet,

*Secondly*, The things we are said to believe, are neither seen nor enjoyed at present, it is the office and virtue of Faith, as it were, to alter the nature of them. Things that are only *hoped for*, it makes to be present: It gives 'em an *immediacy*, a ground, a *substance*. It causes them to be felt



in as much reality, as if they came within the reach of our senses: And, as to *things unseen*, it is  $\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\gamma\chi\omicron$  the evidence, the argument, the manifestation of them. We endure, as seeing him who is invisible. ver. 27. Whom having not seen, we love; and in whom, tho' 1 Pet. i. 8. now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. These two operations of Faith, are what the character of the old testament saints corresponded to. As to *things unseen*, they were persuaded of them: As to *things hoped for*, they embraced them. What they saw afar off, they had the divine art to bring nearer, and so were before-hand with possession. They did not stay for time to give them what they wanted, but received the sweetness without the enjoyment.

There were four things that may be called the chief practice of their Faith, by which it appeared how much they conversed with invisibles and futurities.

1. Their obedience to those commands that reason could not comply with.

2. Their dependence upon those promises that reason could not subscribe to.

3. Their continual regard to Christ Jesus, who to reason is a *stone of stumbling*. And,

4. Their great repose of soul upon heaven and immortality, which to reason is all enthusiasm.

It is very evident from those examples, that the apostle brings into his record, and these are the things for which they have obtained a good report; and therefore theirs could by no means be called a rational religion, in the sense that the word now bears among us. Their Faith was employed in duties that reason opposed, and upon promises that reason suspected; and about a Saviour, whose person, natures, offices, and reward, are to the natural man no better than foolishness. The people who tell us that God commands nothing but what nature

nature knows to be useful, and reveals nothing but what it sees to be evident, have cast their religion into another mould, from that of those patriarchs, who are collected into the rolls of Faith.

1. Their Faith, as it moved in *duty*, went upon things invifible and future. The rule given for it, was, not the law that is written in our hearts; but the exprefs command of God, which sometimes looked very unaccountable to reason. Unbelief would have answered no better in them, than it did in their pofterity; when Chrift told them, *I am* John vi.  
51, 52. *the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he fhall live for ever, and the bread that I will give, is my flefh, which I will give for the life of the world.* Upon this, the Jews ftrove among themfelves, *faying, how can this man give us his flefh to eat?* But it was by Faith, that they did the things that are fo amazing.

This was the cafe of Noah, who being warned ver. 7. of God concerning things not feen as yet, prepared an ark for the faving of his houfe. 'Twas a long time before thefe things came to be feen: *The long-fuf-fering of God waited above an hundred years, whilft the ark was preparing: By this, it's faid, he condemned* 1 Pet. iii.  
20.  
Gen. vi. 3. *the world.* No queftion but all this time the world had plentifully condemned him, as a difturber of the publick peace, and a conceited enthufiaft. Would any but a madman go about talking of a deluge fo many years before-hand? and begin the building of an ark, when there was no appearing neceffity for it? What could they, who believed nothing of their danger, think of the perfon who was moved with all this fear? Might not his own reafon have pleaded againft the command of God? "Lord, let me not be fo long about it: "I had better prefs the world with exhortations "to fobriety, temperance, and godlinefs: a few "practical difcourfes upon the heads of moral vir-  
2 " tue,



"tue, may do 'em some good. If I must be  
 "preacher of righteousness, the most likely way to  
 "win them, is by sermons about natural religion;  
 "but the building of an ark will appear to them  
 "so extravagant and whimsical, that after I have  
 "touch'd the hammer, they will heed nothing  
 "that I can say." Here was a plausible argument,  
 and, as I doubt not, *his* reason would have pleaded  
 it, so *ours* will be ready to avow it. But as *Noah*  
 acted from a higher principle, so he never stuck at  
 any argument of this kind. By faith he took the  
 warning that God gave him; and ἐν φόβῳ, he  
 was moved with fear, as we translate it; but it  
 does not signify the *fear that has torment*, a terror,  
 and confusion of mind: it is rather to be under-  
 stood of a holy reverence for God, and kindly im-  
 pressions from him. It might have been turn'd,  
*he receiv'd, or took it well*; as in the 12th chapter  
 of this epistle, it is translated *a godly fear*. Faith  
 taught him to embrace a command with religious  
 duty, which reason would have started from with  
 contempt and horror: and how mean soever this  
 practice of *Noah* might appear to that generation,  
 or be represented to ours, yet a greater than he was  
 here to be consider'd; for it was *Christ* who went  
 and preached unto the spirits now in prison, which  
 some time were disobedient, when the long-suffering of  
 God waited in the days of *Noah*.

1 Pet. iii.  
 19, 20.

ver. 8.

This was also the case of *Abraham*, in the most  
 important affairs of this life. Examin whether his  
 religion can be called *rational*, in the sense of the  
 word that some advance, and others are so ready to  
 admire; *i. e.* Whether his obedience appear'd to be  
 a thing so evident and comprehensible to human  
 reason. It is said of him, that by faith when he  
 was called (as I would rather chuse to read it, κα-  
 λήσας· ὡς ἠκούσεν ἐξελθεῖν he obeyed, (shewed a rea-  
 diness, an Inclination) to go out into a Place which he  
 should

should afterwards receive for an inheritance: and *Gen. 28.* he actually went out, not knowing whither he went. Will you call this a rational action, that a person shall obey in going he knows not whither? is it not always a maxim with our reason, and one of the best of 'em, not to lose a certainty for an uncertainty? He was heir apparent to a great estate in *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, and yet God caused him *Gen. 28.* to wander from his Father's House. And in what *13.* way was his obedience secured to this unnatural call? Did he compare the two countries, and take that which was better? no; the report given of him is very particular upon this head, that *he knew not whither he went.* Providence seems to keep him in the dark about his removes: his Father came with him into *Haran*, and there they stay for some time: God's design is reserved and kept in, till *Terah* was dead, and then he was brought by another *Acts vii. 2, 3, 2, 5.* strange command into the land where his posterity were to dwell; to them it should be an habitation, but his life in it was all a pilgrimage. Reason would think it an unusual conduct that God should give him *no inheritance in it; no, not so much as to set his foot on:* tho' before his children, *Kings of armies should flee apace;* yet he was a rolling Stranger from Nation to Nation, from one Kingdom to another People. In this trial also faith was his principle and comfort: for *by that he sojourned in the land* *ver. 9.* *of Promise as in a strange Country, dwelling in Tabernacles, with Isaac and Jacob, the Heirs with him of the same Promise.* Here are the three most eminent Patriarchs that ever lived, and whose names are recorded as the standard of a divine care; and yet they had no inheritance in the land which they so readily came to; and for the sake of which, they turned their backs upon all the possession of their Fathers. I am apt to think, reason would be often putting them in mind how much they were called



called from, and how little they were called to: But by faith they obeyed in going thither; and by faith they were content to stay there, tho' it was all along in *Tabernacles*.

But then, the Apostle gives us another command that *Abraham* acted in obedience to; which I will venture to say, is more incomprehensible to human reason, than any mystery that ever was revealed in the old Testament, or the New; and that is mentioned afterwards: *by faith Abraham, when he was* ver. 17, *tried, offer'd up Isaac; and he that had received the Promises, offered up his only begotten Son, concerning whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy Seed be called.* There is not so much in the Doctrine, [That there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one] to contradict your understanding, as there is in this precept to contradict both Nature and Grace, as far as a carnal mind is apt to judge of 'em. That a father should be called to sacrifice a son, is against the first principle of nature; it violates the innermost law that is written in our hearts. That a believer should sacrifice a son in whom so many promises concentered, was to tear in pieces the whole frame of the covenant. Is it any harder to reconcile the notion of three persons to that of one God, than it was to make the command of killing *Isaac*, consist with the reason given for the turning out of *Ishmael*, *or* *in Isaac*, *because in Isaac shall thy seed be called?*

But here was faith in all its glory. The confusion and difficulty that lay around it, set it off as a principle of the operation of God. Faith having received the command, asks no more questions. Here was no room for free-thinking. It knew that God could work through the entanglement, and it never troubled itself about the way how he would do it. 'Twas enough for a believer *ἀπειθήναι*, to

account

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account to take it for granted, that *he was able to raise him from the dead*: this was living by faith, and it appeared by these examples, to be a grace that gives evidence to things not seen: *he believed before God, who quickens the dead, and calls the things that are not, as tho' they were.* And one such act of faith as this, brings more glory to God, than a thousand of those rational services that unbelievers would exalt above it. For thus the Government of God over his People, is confessed to be absolute. *He gives no account of his matters* as the God of nature, and he is not called to give any as the God of grace. Faith is the only principle that teaches us to obey, as servants to such a master ought to do, *not answering again.* The spirit of faith bids us go upon a divine command, *nothing doubting.* Rom. iv. 17.

2. Another employment of their Faith, was in depending upon those promises that seemed most unlikely. In that case it acted, when reason could not, upon things not seen, and things only hoped for. Thus *Noah*, who, being warned by God, believed the threatening, being also directed of God to provide an ark, had the same confidence in a promise. It signifies not only the caution given about his danger, but the direction that he had for a security: For we translate the same word in another place of this epistle (*νεχενυαρισαι*) *he was admonished of God*: He went into the ark before any shower of rain drove him thither: He collected, with a great deal of care, the beasts and fowls of every sort, that were to be kept alive. A very ridiculous settlement this would appear to a profane and a gazing world! But as he knew there was no security *out* of the ark, so he was persuaded there should be a sufficient protection *in* it: And therefore, tho' the stores of water were to be unsealed beneath, and the windows of heaven stretch-

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ed



ed out above; deep would call unto deep, as it never did before, and never shall again; yet he had a divine command that put him into the ark, and a divine promise that kept him there: He never feared its sinking, by the fall of the water spouts, or its dashing upon the edge of mountains. He knew when God shut him in, he would appoint him a set time, and remember him there, and assuredly bring him out again.

The same employment was laid out for Abraham's Faith: When he was called to go into a country, God assured him that he should inherit it; and that was explained in another promise, that his seed should be multiplied, when as yet he had no child. Both he and his wife had given over all thoughts of that blessing; and therefore, had their hope been no more than rational, it must have stuck at a thousand difficulties: But against hope he believed in hope, that he might be the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, so shall thy seed be. And, being not weak in Faith, he considered not his own body, now dead, when he was about an hundred years old; neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God thro' unbelief, but being strong in Faith, gave glory to God, being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able to perform. He had a certainty in matters of faith, tho' some \* ignorant writers in our day, are not afraid to ridicule it. Thus it is observed in this chapter, that thro' faith Sarah herself (*καὶ τὴν Σάρρα*) that very person who had wandered into the jealousies of unbelief received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised; and therefore there sprung of

Act. vii. 5.  
Rom. iv. 18, 19, 20, 21.

ver. 11, 12.

\* Letter of advice to the Dissenters. Morgan of Marlborough, concerning Enthusiasm.

one,

and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky for multitude, and as the sand that is by the sea-shore innumerable. There's this difference between Faith, and a delusive Enthusiasm, that the one goes upon a divine testimony, and the other does not: They are both of them opposite to reason, but the one is as much above it, as the other is below it. y<sup>o</sup> 3. Their faith had all along a regard to Jesus Christ; for the revelation made of him was antecedent to all the particulars that are here given: before ever any thing of religion was produced in our corrupted nature, he had published that promise, *the seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head.* Cain acted without any regard to this; 15. he goes entirely upon natural religion, and brings to God the first-fruits of the earth, a very suitable present from one who was a tiller of the ground. *Abel brought the firstling of the flock, and the fat thereof.* The difference did not lie in the several Offerings, but as that Slaughter was an Emblem of the Lamb of God, who should take away the Sins of the world; so thro' faith did Abel bring unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain: *and it was said, that he was righteous.* There was no more sanctifying social or moral righteousness in a lamb, than there was in a sheaf of corn, or a basket of herbs; the one paid God his due, as much as the other: but by this he obtained a verdict, a good report, *and it was said, that he was righteous;* considered in the righteousness that should be brought forth in the fulness of time: for by this sacrifice, *God testified of his gifts.* By his gifts we must not understand his internal qualifications, but his offerings: God testify'd to them, that they were according to his own institution, and had a happy reference to the great sacrifice that should be made at the end of the world.



Abraham's faith was employ'd here: this was the most considerable part of the promise made to him, that in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed. And upon this our Saviour mentions it as the delight of that patriarch, *your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad.* This part of the covenant was talked over in Heaven. When God was about to destroy Sodom, he delivers himself thus, *shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great nation, and all the Nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. And he will command his Children and household after him, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he has spoken of him.* As all God's dealings with Abraham had still an eye to this, so all Abraham's regard to God, must be supposed to be conducted by the same promise. Thus the Apostle understood it, and you may be sure so did the Patriarch too: *that the Promises were made to Abraham and to his Seed; he saith not unto Seeds, as of many, but as of one, to thy seed, which is Christ. And the Law was added because of Transgressions, till the SEED should come to whom the Promise was made.* So that here Christ is considered as a party in the covenant rather than as a branch of it; as the person with whom it was made, and not merely a blessing that is thus to be secured.

Gen. xviii  
17, 18.

Gal. iii.  
16.

4. Another employment of their Faith, was about the heavenly Inheritance. 'Tis a low supposition, that the great God, in all this train of favours, only designed to protect and guide his Servants through the present life. 'Twas not merely exchanging *Chaldea* for *Canaan*; but that land of promise was to them the earnest and emblem of another: and therefore, when Abraham first went out, tho' he knew not whither he went, as to a settlement here below, yet he did know whither he went

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went in a much greater concern, as the next words tell us; *for he looked for a city which has foundations,* ver. 10.  
*whose builder and maker is God.* This made him easy to dwell in *Tabernacles*: this world it self is but a *Tabernacle*: when it has continued a while longer, it will be taken down: the stakes upon which it stands, *the pillars of the earth*, shall tremble and be astonished at the reproof of God. But there is a city that has foundations, of which he is the *builder and maker*: he is not said to pitch or rear it as he does a tent, but he has *built* it with solidity, he has *made* it with care, and finished it up for an habitation; 'tis a *house made without hands, eternal in the Heavens.*

It is this that my text refers to, *they died in faith*, reaching to something they had not yet attained; *they had not received the promises, but seen 'em afar off.* Some refer this to the promises of a *Messiah*, that he was not to come till a long while after their days: and I would by no means give any sense of the words exclusive of that: but it certainly also comprehends the regard they had to another world; because for this they *confessed themselves pilgrims and strangers upon earth*: ver. 14.  
*for they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country.* This is the very thing to which all their conversation gives light: they shine out *ἐν φανερῷ* in this profession. This was not *Canaan*; their wishes were not bounded when they came thither: that was not the chief place. *If they had been* ver. 15.  
*mindful of the country from whence they came out,* 16.  
*they might have had an opportunity of returning: but now they seek a better country, that is an heavenly, wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for 'em a city.*

II. The declaration concerning these people in my text, is, that they died in Faith; or, *κατὰ τὴν πίστιν*, according to the Faith in which they lived.

I. In



## The Nature of FAITH

1. In the profession of *Faith* as a doctrine.
2. In the exercise of *Faith* as a principle.

Ver. 20. 1. Dying in Faith, is closing our lives with a profession of those doctrines which God has revealed as the scheme of his own glory, and the support of his depending servants. Thus by faith did Isaac bless Jacob and Esau, concerning things to come.

Ver. 21. By Faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshipped upon the top of his staff: this, perhaps, refers to his bowing himself upon the bed's head, to show his confidence in the promise that Joseph had made him, that he should not lie in Egypt, but sleep with his fa-

Ver. 22. thers. By Faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones. It is certain, tho' the principles of our religion are treated with so much contempt, yet the best of people, when they come to die, fix upon these as the ground of their comfort. Orthodoxy is not so much a jest upon a death-bed, as it is when sinners are full of health, and empty of thought. When a soul is just plunging into the valley of the shadow of death, nothing can be of more service to him, than to know the deity of his Saviour; that he commits the keeping of his soul to him, as to a faithful creator.

1 Pet. iv.  
ult.

2. Dying in Faith, is dying in the exercise of it; resting upon the promises, looking to Jesus as one that is able to save to the uttermost. This was the meaning of that cry with which the Martyr Stephen breath'd out his Soul, Lord Jesus receive my Spirit. When we die in faith, 'tis carrying a promise to Heaven as the earnest of it; 'tis bringing down Heaven to the Promise, as the substance of it; pleading from the one, for the other; using the one as our Argument, and the other as our Aim. And thus when we receive the end of our Faith, it is the salvation of our Souls.

You

You may take the application of what you have heard, in these particulars.

1. We see by this, that the life and death of a Gal. ii. 20. believer are all of a piece: *The life I live in the flesh, 1 Thess. is by the faith of the son of God; and when we fall iv. 14- asleep, it is in Jesus.* A Christian does not begin his Religion on a death-bed, but ends it there: *We who live, live unto the Lord; and when we die, it is in the Lord: Whether therefore we live or die, we are the Lord's.* If you defer all serious thoughts till that hour, it will be a very late setting out; and if it should happen to be too late, the delay is never to be retriev'd. When Jacob found that he must die, he looks a long way back, to a very early as- Gen. surance of the divine favour to him: *God Almighty xlviii. 3. appear'd unto me at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed me.*

2. What a noble life and death must the believer have, who passes both of 'em in a conversation with his God? We may say, that by faith Ver. 5, 6. Enoch walked with God; *For before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God; but without faith, it is impossible to please him.* David had found, Psal. xxiii. by a long experience, that Jehovah was his Shepherd; 1, 2, 4- he had fed him, caus'd him to lie down, guided him, restor'd him: and under the same regard, does he make his last application, as one that would be with him in the valley of the shadow of death, with his Rod and his Staff to comfort him then, as they had done so oft before.

'Tis by Faith that the Christian is useful to the world, whilst he is in it: and weaned from the world, when he goes out of it. This is the grace that widens and enlarges a person to the most publick services. This chapter tells us how tyrants were resisted, captivities ended, and revolutions effected. The Apostle having given us the particular actions of several believers, finds himself straiten'd, and there-



therefore crouds a number of them together: *The time would fail me, to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah, of David and Samuel, and of the Prophets, who through Faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtain'd promises, stop'd the mouths of Lions, quench'd the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword; and out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turn'd to flight the armies of the aliens.* He puts all those political braveries upon their Faith, consider'd as their obedience to God's command, their dependence upon his promise, their zeal for a Mediator, and their hope of Heaven. The fury of any one who has not this principle, is but like that of a brute that *rushes into the battle.* Without Religion, the description of a *Hero* rises no higher than what is given of a *Horse*, that he *swallows the ground with fierceness and rage; he smells the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.* That God may use these people as he does their cattle, is true enough; he can play an Atheist against a Bigot, a Blasphemer against a Persecutor: but the days are coming on, when the salvation of his churches shall be produc'd in a cleaner way; *The people that do know their God, shall be strong, and do exploits.* And, as subordinate to this head, suffer me to observe,

3. Some appearances of such a Faith, as I have been speaking of, were the Glory of the *Revolution* that began on this day. I don't mean, that all concern'd in it, had a spirit of Religion to guide 'em. But these Things you may take notice of.

1<sup>st</sup>, There was at least a seriousness put on by those who afterwards laid it aside again: their minds were fill'd with the importance and hazard of the design, and that gave a stun to their immoralities: But,

2<sup>dly</sup>, The people of God were *then* wishing well

well to it in the best manner: that was a time when ~~prayer was wont to be made.~~ The generation of seekers were all employed for this poor nation; and we may suppose that the holding up of their hands had an influence on the battle that was carrying on by others. And,

3dly. It was evident, to the pleasure of all that knew him, that the *Great Prince*, whom God rais'd up upon that occasion, always acted with a reverence for the divine name. Allow me to mention a passage under this head, which I have publish'd sixteen years ago, in a fifth-of-November sermon, entituled, *The Welfare of Israel*: He told those Lords and Gentlemen who met him at *Exeter*, what temptations had been offer'd him to return, and leave the mighty deliverance unaccomplish'd. Among several passages to this purpose, I find these words; "Let the whole world now judge if our pretences are not sincere, since we might have even a bridge of gold to return back; but it is our principle and resolution rather to die in a good cause, than to live in a bad one." How much Religion fill'd his part in that great contrivance, will appear from what pass'd upon his taking leave of the States: "It is needless, saith he, for me to recapitulate the reasons that induce me to leave my native country; but I hope, and pray that God will endue me with wisdom, foresight, and courage, and not withdraw his hand from me in a time of need. I call God to witness, between himself and my own conscience, that I do not undertake such a difficult affair but for his glory; and that my only aim is the honour of God, the welfare of your country, and the *Christian Religion*: I therefore hope for a divine blessing upon it." Here he seem'd to have made an end; but after a short pause, began again, and told them, "That as he did not know

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“ how God might dispose of him, since he had  
 “ put on his sword, and knew not when he might  
 “ put it off; and in case God should let that be-  
 “ fall him, which had happen’d to many men,  
 “ that he should lose his life in the expedition,  
 “ he desired they would take the *Princess*, his wife,  
 “ under their protection, who was as well-affected  
 “ to that country, and the Religion planted there,  
 “ as he was; she could no where find so secure  
 “ a protection, as under the wings of the states.  
 “ And he further desir’d, they would always mind  
 “ him in their private prayers, of which he should  
 “ have the same regard to them.” With these  
 words, saith the historian, the tears ran down his  
 face, and the *Pensioner* gave him a suitable answer.

I will add to this another story, which I shall  
 faithfully relate to you as I heard it. During the  
 long war, that employ’d so much of his care and  
 time, when he knew of a battle, it was his usual  
 way, the night before, to express the most tender  
 concern for the awful design of the next day. He  
 frequently deliver’d the pity of his soul in such  
 words as these; “ Alas! how many thousands of  
 “ poor heedless unthinking creatures will to-mor-  
 “ row be sent into eternity? What a load of guilt  
 “ must lie upon those who have been the occasion  
 of it!” After the watch was set, and the whole  
 army asleep, excepting such as were upon the guard,  
 he took two persons along with him to a place  
 where his own coach stood; one of these went  
 into the coach to pray; and whilst he kneeled there,  
 the king and the other gentleman, in the same po-  
 sture, attended on each side. When this was over,  
 another of the company succeeded to the same  
 work, and his Majesty always concluded. He  
 us’d to be very earnest with God, that if there  
 was any iniquity in his hand, if his designs were  
 not honest and upright, that his way might be  
 hedged

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hedged up with thorns. And when he had recommended himself to the divine protection, in closing the duty, he appealed to him, who searches the hearts, that the cause of a Redeemer, the truths of his gospel, and the liberties of mankind, were the things that he had in view; imploring, with a mixture of humility and boldness, the presence of that God, whose battles he fought, and whose glory he designed. When he had thus discharged his soul, he could refresh himself with an easy mind, his countenance was no more sad, and seldom fail'd to have a good night's rest, as the fruit of his confidence in him, who *alone made him lie down in safety*. This relation I have not in the least enlarged, but rather fear some particulars that were told me are now forgot. The person from whom I had it, was one of the three, Mr. *W. I. Carstairs*, who usually attended the King as his chaplain; and when he told me this, it was with an express desire that I would remember it, and take some proper occasion of making it publick.

The enemies of King *William* were never so well received in any of their invidious characters, as when they represented him an Enthusiast: and no wonder that they talk'd of him in that way, when he had rescued his country from an *Arminian* faction, which had always clogg'd the wheels of the *Nassau Family*. In his days they had, by a false cry for liberty, brought the *French* army to their gates: but the common people saw the error they had wander'd into by the persuasions of a party who had denied him that bought 'em, both in religion and politicks, turning both the grace of God, and the liberties of their country, into wantonness. Like the children of *Israel*, they *remembered not the* Jud. viii. *Lord their God, who had deliver'd them out of the* 34. 35. *hands of their enemies on every side: neither shew'd they*



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they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, according to all the goodness which he had shew'd to Israel.

This poor nation has grievously suffered from the same quarter: They enflamed the civil war, by the vile oppressions in the high-commission and star-chamber courts that led it on. A late learned prelate, who is universally known to have been an historian of the first character, gave me this as his observation; that tho' there was an unhappy concurrence of many things to begin and foment the quarrel between King *Charles* the First, and his parliament, yet this seemed to have as great a share as any one particular. And as the ground of this opinion, he mentioned a passage that led him into it, viz. Mr. *Jenkins* was amongst those *London* ministers who petitioned, protested, and did every thing they could, against the execution of the King: He was afterwards found guilty of high-treason for a design of restoring *Charles* the Second, and had his life given him by the pardon of that government. Yet this man, who had run so many hazards for the royal family, on the account of his nonconformity, was thrown into *Newgate*; and all the merit of his former zeal, was of so little value, that there he died. Whereas Mr. *John Goodwin*, who had writ not only in defence, but in commendation of what was done on the 30th of *January*, came into no trouble, but was always sure of friends among the bishops. The reason of this partiality, as that great man told me, he supposed was the *Calvinism* of the former, and the *Arminianism* of the latter. But I'm sensible this is a long digression from my subject; I was unawares led to say this of a party, who have so often proved the political enemies of *Europe*; nor can I ever think that any good will come from the faction, (and especially when they are heightened into *Arianism*) who have already done so much harm to the

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the house of *Orange*, and the peace of *Great Britain*.  
I return to give you some farther account of our  
*great deliverer*: He always professed the utmost  
concern for the doctrines of our religion: The  
act of toleration, with which his reign begun,  
*like a morning without clouds*, was contrived with  
a solemn security to the first principles of the  
christian Faith\*. When he drew his sword for  
liberty, he never understood it to be a liberty of  
denying or concealing the truth. When they  
talked of fighting for the protestant faith, it was  
not a faith that left us uncertain who was our  
God; they did not mean by it a floating scum,  
that has nothing in it but dirt, and wind, and stench.  
To have talked then of uncertainty in matters of  
faith, would have blasted their cause, weakened  
their hands, and proclaimed their folly in ventu-  
ring their lives for they knew not what. To  
have set an establishment in the doctrine of God  
our Saviour, upon a level with *Papish* infallibili-  
ty†, would soon have convinced the people, that  
a slavery to others is not much worse than a blind-  
ness in themselves: That if their religion was  
what they could not be *sure of* it would never  
bear the charges of a battle. But such *profane*  
*and vain babblings* were always the Abomination  
of that prince: and persons may with as much  
reason make him the patron of *Tyranny*, as of  
*Scepticism*. The great argument that he always  
us'd for toleration and indulgence among Protes-

\* Provided always, and be it farther enacted, by the  
authority aforesaid, that neither this act, or any clause, ar-  
ticle, or thing herein contained, shall extend, or be con-  
strued to extend, to—any person that shall deny in his  
preaching or writing the doctrine of the blessed Trinity,  
as it is declared in the aforesaid articles of religion.

† Letter of advice to Dissenters.

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## The Nature of FAITH.

taunts, was not that churches might be blown into all corners by every wind of doctrine: but he pressed it upon their well known agreement in *the first principles of the oracles of God*.

4. If this faith is laid aside, you lose the soul of your cause. From that time it has no other subsistence, than in the vile bargains of selfish men, who have no *fear of God*, and no *hatred of covetousness*: these go together. When once people that roll in dignities, can run foul upon your religion, you must never suppose they will be very tender of your property: but as they contrive a scheme to pollute the one, they will have their schemes to swallow up the other. When the cause comes into such hands, it is defiled, it's weaken'd, it's blasted. *Hypocrites and unbelievers* go together in both worlds; they are usually characters meeting in the same men: but if not, the persons are to be thrown into the same place. I'll close this head with the observation of the learned Dr. Burnet, late *bishop of Sarum*, in a sermon preached before the King, at a time when I had no fears about the confusions we have since met with; but he that knew what a scandal *Socinianism* brought upon the REVOLUTION, might have the same Apprehensions from *Arianism* upon the HANOVER-SUCCESSION. "We ought, says he, to rejoice  
" with trembling—if we still go on in a course  
" of impiety and immorality, we may justly fear  
" a return of those heavy judgments, that may  
" sadly convince us that there is a God that judg-  
" es in the earth: he has variety of plagues in store,  
" famines, pestilence, fires and shipwrecks: so  
" that tho' one great woe seems to be past, he has  
" many in reserve—it is not to be denied, but the

† This has since been very evident in that detestible bubble call'd the HARBURG LOTTERY.

*Infidelity*

## The Nature of FAITH.

37

“ *Infidelity* of some who expressed a zeal for our  
“ constitution in civil concerns, was laid hold on  
“ by some ill-minded men, to make all those who  
“ were zealous for the revolution, pass for enemies  
“ to religion and the church, because of the *im-*  
“ *pieties* of some who seek shelter among ’em—But  
“ if we go on to *build up* ourselves, and the peo-  
“ ple committed to our charge, *in our most holy*  
“ *faith*, we shall grow up to be a *holy temple to the*  
“ *Lord*; we shall recover our ancient dignity of  
“ being the chief support of the reformation, not  
“ only in our own, but all the foreign churches :  
“ by which means, our kings will be truly the  
“ *defenders of the faith*, both at home and abroad.”

5. Here’s an argument for us to live in the  
faith : that will make us easy when things go wrong ;  
it will make us useful when the time comes of their  
going right. Those persons, who, in \* a late  
*day of rebuke and blasphemy*, were not ashamed to  
own Christ for their God, may have returns made  
’em in a proper way, that he will *not be ashamed*  
*to be call’d their God*. Or if no such turn as this  
is produced in our day, yet living in the faith,  
is the way to die in it, with full assurance, having  
the promises clear within you, and glory opening  
before you. You will thus have an abundant en-  
trance into the Joy of your Lord.

† At Salters Hall Mar. 3. 1718-19.

F I N I S.





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